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A VENTURE IN REMEMBRANCE



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M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE

*A*  
*Venture in*  
*Remembrance*



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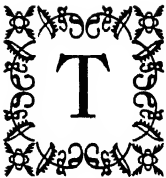
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## *Preface*

HERE ARE certain things I should like to say about the following pages before anyone else says them. I have no illusions with respect to the inherent importance of the story they have to tell. As a biographer and historian I have learned the value of personal narratives. At their best these proceed from men and women of large achievement and penetrating vision. Sometimes a special cause or grievance gives vitality to their central theme. This book has no such reasons for being. Its chief purpose is to fix attention not so much upon its author as upon backgrounds, personalities, and phases of life in the region and period he has known. The period, as it unfolded for him, was one in which he counts it good fortune to have lived.

According to James Russell Lowell, "John Smith's autobiography is commonly John Smith's design for an equestrian statue of himself." Only the other day Mr. Porter Sargent gave to one type of autobiography the name of "alibiography"—in

## *Preface*

that it ignores or evades everything of the inmost significance. My hope for the following pages is that they may be found to fit neither of these definitions. Indeed they are no more than a venture in remembrance. The fact that neither poverty nor riches have been my lot deprives the story, in its outward aspects, of sensational elements, either sordid or splendid. More personally also there have been neither poverty nor riches. When one is neither short nor tall, handsome nor hideous, specially gifted nor utterly stupid, quite Philistine nor yet a flaming child of light, what is to be expected? Others may discover and deplore other lacks, as of tearing passions and mystic insights. After all I must be content to stand revealed, when this narrative has to become autobiographic, as the unexciting person I am.

Barrett Wendell said to me one day, "There is nothing I regret so much as the discretions of my youth." Perhaps I had too many of these. Perhaps to preserve a few of them, as some of us do, is to become tamely respectable, even to invite that more invidious adjective "genteel." Besides running these risks I shall have to confess myself at the last a "liberal"—and this in spite of the dis-

## *Preface*

repute into which that term has fallen. It may be enough simply to appear as one who has made his way, like an archæologist, through several strata of civilization with no loss of interest in passing from one stratum to another. Some of my few contemporaries may enjoy matching their memories with mine. Will they join with me in wondering what our juniors, heavily outnumbering us, will think of our disappearing world?

M. A. DEW. H.

*Boston,*  
*March, 1941*





# *Contents*


	Preface	vii
I	Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island	3
II	Pennsylvania School-Days	44
III	Lehigh and Harvard	58
IV	Born or Made?	99
V	“Star-bright Companion of my Youth”	104
VI	Initiate of Boston	129
VII	Farming in Dark Glasses	161
VIII	The Boston of Fiction and Fact	175
IX	Confessions of a Biographer	197
X	Bypaths of Friendship	215
XI	Unrepentant Liberal	231
XII	Wartime Editor	241
XIII	Books, Institutions, and Persons	253
XIV	Catastrophe	278
XV	After the Day’s Work	291
XVI	Testament	306
	Index	309



# A VENTURE IN REMEMBRANCE



I  
*Boyhood Summers in  
Rhode Island*

 AT THE beginning of this summer of 1939 I find myself, for the first time in many years, among the unemployed. Usually there has been a substantial piece of writing, or editing, to be continued or completed. Out of a mass of papers, sometimes mountainous in bulk, it has been my task to extract some semblance of the man or the scene to which they were related. In these biographical and historical attempts I have proceeded on the principle, which still seems sound to me, that readers, "if any," will care more about the subject presented to them than about the person who does the presenting—the show, in a word, being more important than the showman.

Since one cannot have it both ways, I have sometimes been taken to task for not putting enough of myself into books with my own name on the title page. Where are my own opinions, critics have asked; what have I to say about the issues in-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

volved in a study of any man or time? I dare say I have been at some fault in this matter. Even so, the opposite fault would seem to me more grievous—to be accused of planting myself so firmly in the foreground that a reader must peep between my legs and round my body to catch a glimpse of the subject. Had I pursued this method, it would not have been without precedent.

Now in this summer of unemployment—at a time, also, when security for the aging and the aged is an object of general desire—I am proposing to turn over a new leaf. For one thing, I shall seek a sort of security in reverting to my own past—something immune from change. As in previous summers, I am confronted with many papers. Only they are my own—an appalling array of miscellaneous writing, magazine and newspaper articles, book reviews, printed letters on affairs once current, and bits of verse, generally of the lighter variety. As I turn over these pages of incriminating evidence—much of which I should blush to expose to any eye but my own—I am strongly impressed with the familiar fact that journalism, of whatever degree, is a thing of its own day and had better be allowed to perish with

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

that day. The truth is that writings known as "fugitive" should generally be permitted to make their escape. In all these printed pages of mine there are extremely few with any valid claim to permanence; how this may be achieved is not my present concern. What does concern me is the relation of such a welter of words to a personal existence that began in the final year of the Civil War and has continued well into the second third of the present century. To what extent was the background of that existence characteristic of the century in which it began? How did the varied interests for which these papers of mine speak—in a voice now often reduced to a whisper—grow out of that background?

Between these papers and those of other origins to which I have devoted many laborious hours there is, however, one important difference: over all of this record now spread before me plays the light of memory. Every creator of an object of beauty knows how much more of true beauty encompassed and illumined his vision of it than he could count upon imparting to the object itself. Every pleader for a cause realizes that his plea for it at a given moment is a poor, partial affair,



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

suggesting no more than a fraction of the cause in its actual magnitude. So, I believe, others than I must find it with nearly all their attempts at expression. The colors of it may fade with the passage of time—they may never have been particularly vivid. There was, however, something behind the expression which came out of something larger and more lasting than the immediate occasion. It is to this something that one is pointed by the play of memory over one's own deliverances. For the occupation of a mind in danger of going stale for want of exercise, an evocative survey of background and interests appears to justify itself—certainly for the evoker, possibly for a few others.

Hitherto, almost invariably, my summer tasks have been undertaken because they were asked for. This time the task is self-imposed. I begin it on a June morning. Green trees and a blue sea meet my eyes when I raise them from the paper on which I am writing in a cottage on Cape Ann. The scene is not that of the earliest summers I remember, but sunlight and apple trees and bays of the Atlantic suffer little change from year to year and place to place. So it is that I turn first of all to the

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

long summers of a long boyhood, and to that corner of the world which still smiles for me in memory beyond all others. That corner is a farm called "Weetamoe" in Bristol, Rhode Island. Still belonging to my family, it was acquired more than a century ago by my grandfather. From him it passed to my father, who loved it consumingly. The lore of the region was dear to him. Like others of his generation he accepted without question the belief, now obsolete, that Norsemen, responsible for the Newport "tower" wreathed in romance by Longfellow, had sailed up Mount Hope Bay, past the beloved farm, and left their imperishable *carte de visite* on Dighton Rock. More than seventy years ago my father gave the name of "Weetamoe" to his place of some ninety shore-bound acres. Once I was explaining the name to a dweller on Buzzard's Bay, and telling the story that Weetamoe, a sister-in-law of King Philip, was trying to escape from her English foes, in a canoe, which capsized. She was drowned, I said, and her body was found on the shore of our Bristol farm. "Not at all," came the reply, "all that happened at Pocasset, on Buzzard's Bay." Perhaps it did. I have sought no historic authority

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

to support my father's belief. What I know is that my oldest brother, when I was a mere boy, caused the father of the famous Herreshoffs, a Brown classmate of my father's,—or was it possibly another local boat-builder?—to build him a fast, large catboat, to which he gave the name of *Weetamoe*. When yachtsmen of later years bestowed this name upon racing sloops of Herreshoff building, I felt as if our privacy had been invaded—somewhat, I suspect, as a Cabot feels when a Kabetznik tries to adopt his name.

Bristol was the birthplace of my father early in the nineteenth century, of my grandfather in the eighteenth, and of forbears, though of other names than Howe, in the seventeenth. When I was born at Weetamoe, in the summer of 1864, it was merely the accident of time that kept me from being a native of Philadelphia, for there my father had been established for about twenty years in the rectorship of St. Luke's Church. The family pilgrimages between Pennsylvania and Rhode Island every June and September seem as portentous in retrospect as the migrations of whole communities in *The Good Earth*. I recall them but hazily in the years before my father became Bishop of Central

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

Pennsylvania and the family moved, in 1872, from Philadelphia to Reading. From that metropolis of the Pennsylvania Dutch—chosen as a “see city” largely by reason of the railroad facilities essential to a bishop before the day of automobiles, but acquiring through more than twenty years the endearing qualities of a second home—we set forth early in the morning,

A noble army; men and boys,  
The matron and the maid.

It was a long ride in a passenger coach—if there were parlor cars we never knew their interiors—across eastern Pennsylvania and all of northern New Jersey. A large basket carried the midday meal. My mother—bless her heart—had the pious habit, when traveling, of humming the tunes of hymns, and at least one self-conscious son of hers would distress himself at the carrying quality of her muted voice. When we reached Jersey City the thrills began.

We younger members of the expedition felt ourselves sons of the sea—we brothers, and sometimes our contemporaneous nephew, later known to a larger world as Dr. Hobart Amory Hare of

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Philadelphia: he was the only surviving representative of my father's first marriage, his daughter Mary Amory having become the wife of Bishop Hare, "Apostle to the Sioux." The first whiff of salt air on the ferryboat seemed to restore us to our native element. Then, as children of the Church, we rejoiced in identifying the spire of Trinity,—now a lost needle in an architectural haystack,—rising high above the low buildings of Wall Street and Broadway. In that memory I find one of my strongest claims to antiquity.

If the ferryboat was exciting, the Fall River boat, a very galleon of juvenile romance, was still to be boarded. When the musical chime of the ferryboat mooring chains fell silent and we stepped ashore on Manhattan Island, the North River Pier from which we were soon to sail was too near to justify the expense of cabs. Then we fell in for the march along West Street—crowded with drays—my father at the head of the procession, almost as "short and stout and round-about" as the Bishop of Rumbold himself—and zealous, but with a zeal suggesting a dignity and fervor unknown to that prelate. Whether consciously or not, he always gave the impression of

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

having nothing to do with the stragglers in his train—my mother, bearing fardels like her leader, like the several maids that followed her, and like ourselves, one of whom would carry a bird cage and another lead (or drag) a black setter who insisted on lying down at every such crisis as the passing of a railway engine or similar monster. A candid camera would have told a staggering story of us all.

Safe on the Fall River boat—most warmly blessed if it happened to be the *Bristol*—we had yet a great moment in store. Had the carriage-horses and the coachman, who had started for New York on a freight train on the day before our own departure, arrived in time to sail with us? Somehow we always learned that they had. Then, planted on the forward deck above the freight gangway, we watched and waited, and swelled with pride and joy as we saluted our friend of the stable leading the pair on board. Band music and fluttering flags and a great bedizened figure pointed out as “Commodore Jim Fisk,” whose lurid eminence was yet all unknown to us, float back in memory; also the porterhouse steak which, by careful figuring, was counted the most rewarding

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

item for dinner; also a cherished family scandal to the effect that, heavy with sleep before seeking our staterooms, I was heard one night to murmur, "Let's go out on the piazza." That was hard to live down.

There is another memory—and none could be more grisly—of an evening on the Fall River boat. As we were passing from Hell Gate into the Sound, there was the spectacle of a steamboat beached and in furious flames. The sun was setting directly behind it and against its blaze, beneath the canopy of smoke and fire, we could see small black figures, silhouetted against the sun, leaping from the decks of the steamer into the water. The next morning all the world shuddered at the story of a hideous disaster—the burning of the excursion boat *Seawanhaka* with a shocking toll of lives.

On our early morning arrival at Fall River, there was always another boat to take—the *Bradford Durfee* or the *Richard Borden*, for the stop at Bristol on the daily passage to Providence. I must not linger on the first emergence of Weeta-moe over the spearpoint of Mount Hope, or the stop at the Bristol Ferry wharf, far too prolonged

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

when the onion-crop was plentiful. At the Bristol wharf, the journey's end where lovers of a native soil first met it, Mr. Darling, our farmer, and a farm hand—not yet “Portagee”—were awaiting us with a beach-wagon and carry-all for the drive of a mile or more to the farm. I am not sure that the more deliberate oxcart did not lumber after us with the trunks. The gaunt Mrs. Gladding—like Mr. Darling, an authentic fountainhead of Yankee speech—had opened the house and prepared the first—and oh, so late—breakfast. Johnnycakes, spread with butter from our own dairy, strawberries from our own beds—what famishing boy would not welcome that indigenous repast, *apéritif* to a long banquet of summer pleasures!

It would be at once tedious and futile to attempt a full recital of them. I must, however, recall the immediate excited inspections of the barn, with its horses and cows, of the poultry yard, with its outlying turkeys, guinea fowl, a peacock and his sober mate, of the pigs, and, most of all, of “the shore.” Halfway down the lane leading to it was the haycap. Each year, as I grew taller, I looked to see if the “M.H.” I had carved on one of its



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

shingles on a sad September day of departure remained, at its lowly height, to show how small a boy had wrought the mural lettering. At the shore itself stood the stone wharf and bathhouse—emblems, had we thought of such things, of a stability that seemed (alas! the seeming) beyond repeal. The stones edging the top of the wharf were cyclopean in our eyes. Each of us claimed as “my stone” one of them, at a bend near the base of the wharf, and on this stone each left his hastily stripped clothing for the first swim, as for the many that followed. There was no nonsense of trunks in that privacy of glorious, unfeminated light. And there was small need for towels. The “pond lot,” with its smooth surface that was never tilled, ran down to the wharf, and, racing naked as young Grecians over its sward, we dried ourselves in the sun and wind. Did any of us realize what lucky little devils we were? I am afraid not.

Was it not, incidentally, lucky also, that I learned to swim, I believe, at six? An older brother, cruel only to be kind, pushed me off the wharf near its end at high tide and told me to swim ashore. Somehow I did. Such are the advantages of growing up in a large family. Through all these

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

years there were eight of us, four older brothers and a sister, born of my father's second marriage, and two boys besides myself, of the third. My mother treated us all as her own children, and could not herself have been more beloved by any and all. If I am to touch upon vital statistics, I should make a thorough job of it and say something more. My father, twice a widower, was married three times—at twenty-five, at thirty-five, and at forty-nine. Of these three marriages eighteen children, of whom nine grew to maturity, were born. Of his lineal descendants more than ninety are now living, more than twenty have died. In numerical aspect the family suggests the clerical Quiverfuls of former centuries, even the patriarchal circles of the Old Testament.

The benefits of growing up in the abundant moiety to which I belonged were many. Of course they would not all have been possible but for my father's modest salary and my mother's moderate income, amounting together to what now seems barely adequate to an old man of simple tastes whose wife has died and whose children no longer need his support. On this joint income, however, my parents maintained two large houses in which

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

my father needed no Saint Paul to tell him that a bishop must be "given to hospitality," nor a Saint Peter to say, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." This was a native instinct with both my parents, and the houses were constantly full of guests—clerical and other friends, when all the rooms were not filled with children and grandchildren.

There was plenty of good talk, the livelier for my father's inexhaustible store of anecdote and apt quotations, and there was much reading aloud of good books. In all the talk, by the way, I cannot remember that any question of economics ever came up, except perhaps in relation to the tariff, that central article of the Republican creed as accepted by faithful Pennsylvanians. If the young had ever heard of Karl Marx, they had no disposition to discuss his theories, and our elders would have regarded Robert G. Ingersoll as a more destructive force. This, I suppose, meant only that the social and economic order seemed so positively settled that there was no use of talking about it.

As for the books, when I was called upon, some ten or fifteen years ago, to produce a short article on "The Reading Habit"—I believe it was never

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

printed—it contained, as I now discover, two paragraphs which seem to have been prepared for use at this very point, although the “library” to which they refer was not in Rhode Island but in Pennsylvania.

There were books enough, [I wrote] in my father’s house—some 7,000 of them, rising like a full-moon tide from the library and other rooms on the ground floor up through the halls and bedrooms to the top. Theology, the classics, in a great set of Valpy’s Delphin folios, and such compendiums of knowledge as Rees’s Encyclopedia, with certain pages of animal pictures which I should like well to see again with all their traces of frequent handling by the younger members of a large family. These were plentiful. But there were books also which young and old could share, particularly the works of the masters in English prose and verse. Whether one would have learned to care for them without that sharing, who can say?

Certain it is that a family habit of reading aloud—in the days before evening distractions had become universal—did much for the bookishly disposed youth of my generation. Both my parents were admirable readers, especially of poetry. The wise young of today would doubtless despise much

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

of the Tennyson and Matthew Arnold and Longfellow to which I was exposed in boyhood as irretrievably Victorian, but if more of them could take a course in listening to these writers, to Dickens and Scott, the Ingoldsby Legends of Richard Barham, and the verses of Thomas Hood, Dr. Holmes, and Bret Harte which some of us heard read under the "Argand burners" of a civilization that seems as remote as the Second Empire, I cannot help thinking that their sense of values and proportions would suffer no serious loss.

Together with a liking for the contents of books, we were taught some respect for them as mere physical creations. I remember being detected one day by my mother in the act of bending back with considerable vigor the covers of a book which did not open as it should. "Please don't do that," came the word that still sounds across the years: "it is just as if you were inflicting physical pain upon the author."

In the buried pages of "The Reading Habit," there is another passage of which I must revive the substance. This is both to make public avowal of my own fallibility, and at the same time to lay claim, as an early admirer of Emily Dickinson, to something like the first place among the many

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

who have applied two of her most familiar lines to their own books. When I ordered my book-plate, at the end of the nineteenth century, from that prince of designers, the late Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, I asked him to join together a picture of a ship of ancient times and the legend,

“There is no frigate like a book  
To bear us lands away.”

So the drawing hangs in my library today, and so, in its reproduction, it is pasted into most of the books that belonged to me when I got it—and into few of the more recent acquisitions. If I had only taken the trouble to look at the lines of Emily Dickinson’s which I thought I knew by heart, I should have found that the second of them was “To *take* us lands away”—not “*bear* us,” as any mere purveyor of poetic diction would have written it. I could have chosen not quite so painful a method of learning the lesson of verification.

This is too long a digression from the Weeta-moe summers. There was another evening pleasure especially to be mentioned—the pleasure of music. Skill enough to accompany songs on the piano, if they were not too difficult, was always

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

available. A brother with an excellent voice had an extensive repertory of the popular songs of the seventies and eighties—not always so respectable as those of Harrigan and Hart. Then there was at hand a copy of *Boosey's National Glees*, and our renderings of “My dear mistress had a heart” and “Have you seen my Flora pass this way?” were, at least to our own ears, melting performances. I believe it was the first of these glees that involved us in an amusing episode. On a sloop yacht, the *Brunette*, belonging to my eldest brother—the only one of us capable of any such luxury—we were anchored one night in Newport harbor. From the deck of a white schooner lying near us suddenly floated the harmonies of a glee familiar to us through “Boosey.” No sooner had the neighboring singers finished the first stanza than we antiphonally took up the second. It was not until many years had passed that I could confirm my belief, through comparing notes with my friend Cameron Forbes, that the schooner could hardly have been other than his father's *Azalea*, on which the Forbeses, sailing from Naushon, used to enjoy simple musical pleasures like our own. I still wonder whether their surprise, on this occasion,

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

equaled ours in finding that there were no exclusive property rights in our favorite English glees.

Some fifty years later there was a similar interchange of old minstrelsy—only under strangely different circumstances. On one of those May mornings in London when the heavy overcoat purchased for the following winter in America is a lifesaving garment, I was visiting the Tower with my wife. On an outdoor bench sat a group of yeomen looking precisely as if they might burst at any moment into a Gilbert and Sullivan chorus. Instead of that one of them, ruddy-faced and twinkling-eyed, a-cold for all his feathers, piped up with

“Hail, smiling morn, smiling morn, smiling morn;”

to which I piped an antiphonal

“That tip’st the hills with gold, that tip’st the hills with gold.”

This, from an American tourist in a solemn procession of sight-seers, was too much for him. Nor had he quite recovered from his astonishment when, considerably later, we retraced our steps and passed the same bench. He picked me out with



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

his merry eye from my shivering companions, and sang again—this time no more than “Hail, smiling morn.” My response was not set to music, but I was sure we shared a friendly consciousness of things in common. Again I was thankful for the Boosey book of glees at Weetamoe.

To revert to the yachts in Newport harbor, let me not give the impression that they were at all our natural habitat. Far from it. One small catboat after another was moored off the wharf at Weetamoe. A rowboat would sometimes blossom with a sail, and once there was a whaleboat, the *Jonah*, rigged like a miniature schooner. In such humble craft we learned, not too badly, the essentials of sailing. The place of it all in the general scheme of things concerned us not at all. We knew no more than that we enjoyed to the full every bit of it—even the perilous salvation by night of boats that dragged their moorings in severe southeasters. It was not until I had grown too old and stiff for the pure fun of it that I came to philosophize on all its merits. Then I saw what it might do for training the young—I only wish I had reaped more of its benefits—in quickness of decision and fertility of resource. In a small boat, as in a large,

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

one is confronted with the inevitable. Tides, waves, winds are forces of nature which are not going to bend themselves to the will of the sailor, young or old. It is for him to turn them to account, and not destroy himself in the process. But I will not frame a Parable of the Catboat Mariner.

On the first of these pages I spoke of my bookish occupations in later summers. When books were only to be read, and not written, there were other occupations. Sailing, of course, was one of them, and tennis was another. These were serious employments. The tennis began early, in that summer of 1878, when my father attended the second Lambeth Conference in London, and the young of the family were left in charge of their older married brothers and sister. The best thing my parents brought home from England—as we youngsters thought—was the story of their entering a London drawing-room at an evening party, announced as “The Lord Bishop of Central Pennsylvaneî'-a, and Mrs. Howe.” The second good thing brought to Bristol that summer was the game of lawn tennis. An older brother had spent some weeks at Nahant, where the recently imported English game had won its earliest American devotees

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

—Dr. James Dwight and others. A proper equipment for the game was beyond our reach, but there was the so-called lawn opposite the house, in reality a level field shorn twice a year by the mowing machine which, at a proper distance, filled the grass-scented air with the sweetest of sounds. There was also enough ingenuity and enterprise to cope with obstacles, as Emerson's aunt described them—things to be overcome. There must have been some printed instructions giving the dimensions of a court and the rules of the game. A fish-net was found and strung between two homemade posts. The lines were whitewashed on the uneven grass. Funds were forthcoming to order two A. J. Reach racquets from Philadelphia—strange pear-shaped objects, somewhat resembling a lacrosse stick in shape, if not quite in the looseness that fell within a year or two upon their stringing. The real triumph of ingenuity, however, lay in the creation, by my clerical brother who had brought the game to us, of two more lop-sided spoons which passed for racquets—crude and ungainly enough, yet opening the way to many an animated game of doubles. Every game demanded quick wits, for there was no telling how a

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

ball would bound, and often at a second's notice a backhand stroke had to be substituted for the intended forehand. By degrees other grass courts, far superior to ours, sprang up on an adjoining country place and in the town. The speed of later tennis was utterly unknown, but, unwitting pioneers as we were, we got quite as much fun out of it all as the more privileged were soon to find on the beautifully manicured courts of the Newport Casino. Once the lure of the tournaments there enticed me to destruction. A certain success in local and collegiate contests had given me a foolish confidence. Seeding had not been invented, and in the first round at Newport I drew the winner of the Narragansett Pier tournament of the week before—the late Walter Berry of Paris. As it happened, no other game was in progress at the time, and the entire “gallery” gathered round our court. The ordeal was short but decisive. I am glad to have forgotten the precise score, but I remember with gratitude the friendliness with which one feminine spectator, perhaps the only young woman of the Newport world then known to me, offered her condolences on my well-merited downfall.

A few years ago, in the presence of one of my

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

sons, many of whose college contemporaries were, like himself, taking on "jobs" of one sort and another in the summer vacations, I was recalling, with a contemporary of my own who had known the Bristol of my boyhood, some of its pleasures. This son wondered how I happened, as he expressed it, ever to have been such a "swell," and asked, "What did the ordinary guy do in summer?" It was easy to point out the fact that I was anything but a "swell," if the term implied, as it seemed to do, any regular commerce with the world of fashion. Neither Bristol nor Reading lent itself to extensive relations with that world. Nor did the family pocketbook: all its resources were required for maintaining a scale of family life conditioned by the circumstances of its setting. The time, be it remembered, was one of profound peace and apparent security. Large families managed to live in considerable comfort on what would now seem prohibitively meager resources. In most respects the "ordinary guy" in my own circle of acquaintance and friendship enjoyed irresponsible summers much like mine, though not in precisely such surroundings. There was, however, one respect in which I cannot help thinking my brothers

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

and I had a certain advantage over most of our contemporaries. I did not realize it at the time.

This was the advantage of a definitely religious background, accepted, like the trees of the "Grove" that shielded the house from the "Back Road," as an established fact. Of course there was always "grace before meat," and there were always family prayers. When I included in my *John Jay Chapman and His Letters* a poem he wrote about the family prayers at the country place of his Grandfather Jay, it was with a strong nostalgic sense of what I had myself known at Weetamoe. Nobody thought of appealing from the practice of church-going every Sunday morning. There was a huge vehicle known as the "Bogert carriage," built for a New York kinsman of that name and acquired, doubtless at a bargain, when his own scale of life as a summer resident of Bristol had to be reduced. Each of its three seats—the driver's and two facing each other, within—was wide enough for three, and eight of us were often rolled away to the morning service at St. Michael's. I will not conceal the fact that this was alleviated at times by what seemed the positively comic aspects of some of the local "characters" and by certain quaintnesses

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

of utterance from the chancel and the choir-gallery. For the dinner that followed there was a cold roast—to save the cook from Sunday work. There was also an inevitable dessert of cold rice and raisins, very cold and very acceptable as a vehicle for cream from the dairy. When my mother used to offer it, by its name of “Poor Man’s Pudding,” to a clergyman who came habitually to our Sunday dinner-table in winter, he never disappointed us by omitting an unctuous rubbing of his hands and inclining of his head, as he responded, “Most appropriate, Mrs. Howe, most appropriate.”

On the Sunday afternoons of summer there was often an innocuous walk to the top of Mount Hope, that gentle eminence lifted high for us by the traditions of King Philip. For Sunday reading, I remember that I was encouraged to make my first acquaintance with *Pilgrim’s Progress*, in a little green volume now my own. Novels were taboo—and for entertainment, on Sunday evenings, there was a Bible game of “I see,” in which my mother, out of a deep store of biblical knowledge, would depict scenes for us to identify, if we could, by providing the names she had carefully omitted. Each of us took a turn at this story-tell-

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

ing, and the youngest member of the family, the Joseph of our tribe, fittingly enough clung to an opening "I see a pit" until laughed out of it. To complete the Sunday program, there was usually some singing of hymns on the piazza or round the piano. Was this better or worse than a regular Sunday evening tuning in on Charlie McCarthy?

I am well aware that to many readers of the present day, especially the young, all this will present an appalling picture. To some it may seem even to suggest an American Barchester and Plumstead Episcopi. So it might, had there been any trace of the falseness and worldliness which played so large a part in the Proudie and Grantly households. In a little book of mine about Bristol, I have suggested that a blending of worldliness and piety was a historic characteristic of the town. My father had grown up in the town, where many of his De-Wolf kinsfolk, though none of his immediate family, were feasting freely on the fruits of a maritime prosperity, to which the slave-trading and privateering that were once respectable made a large contribution. In him the pronounced piety of his upbringing and his lifelong sincere concern with the other world never subdued completely



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

a native enjoyment of the good things of this world. I am conscious of no filial disrespect in recalling, for a single instance, his pleasure in good horses, with a pair of which he was always provided for the daily afternoon drive—reins in hand, and so erect that he would never have missed a back on the front seat. I must recall also one of the rare occasions on which he provoked the strong disapproval of my mother—tacit, but clearly apparent even to the young. This was when a new pair of handsome bays, purchased without domestic consultation, appeared at the door. There was no mistaking the fact that my mother would never have encouraged any such indulgence of an extravagant taste.

After all, this liking of my father's for the appurtenances of comfort and dignity did not remotely betoken the kind of worldliness in clergymen which brings some of them so justly into disrepute. He made true friends of all sorts and conditions of men, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, was utterly innocent of cultivating the more powerful members of society with any thought of his own advantage. In many ways he was less a Victorian than a belated Federalist of

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

Georgian tradition. His father, by the way, stood to his Federalism in Bristol when his influential DeWolf uncles were of the Jeffersonian party. For one superficial sign of my father's rootage in the past, I take his long-continued practice of heading his manuscript sermons with the text in Greek. How far into the nineteenth century did others carry this practice? For all his inherited Federalism, his first love among the poets—of whom he came to love many—was Burns, whose conception of "a man for a' that" he honestly shared. It was characteristic of him, when a cheerless ground-floor bedroom at Weetamoe was converted into a pleasant library, to place for an inscription on its mantelpiece these words of Virgil: "*Deus nobis haec otia fecit.*" It remained for his irreverent sons to translate the phrase, "The Lord has given us this soft snap." There was genuine reverence, and gratitude, in my father's choice of the words. If some of an old Bristolian's love for the amenities of life remained in him, there was also a genuine survival of the local piety.

In my mother there was no conflict between worldliness and piety, for the first did not enter into her composition. Her father, Asa Whitney,

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

was born of sound Yankee stock on a Massachusetts farm, from which he set forth early in life to make his own way in New York State. His steps in making it need not be recorded. They led him in due course to Philadelphia, where he won success as an inventor and manufacturer—of railway car-wheels—and became, for a time, president of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. A chair of engineering, endowed by him, in the University of Pennsylvania, was by no means his only public benefaction. True and deep piety was the order of his domestic life. Had something more of worldliness been blended with it and transmitted to his admirable sons, there might well have been more today to show for the fortune he accumulated. What he transmitted to my mother, and what her own life developed, was more valuable than that.

She was the best exemplar of genuine Christian piety I have ever known at close range. A native gift of sympathy and compassion is fundamental for such a character. I wonder if its perfect flowering does not demand another gift which she possessed—that gift of humor, which helps more than anything else to keep things in their places, to prevent either the great or the small from crowding

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

the other out of existence. I remember my mother's comment on a visitor to Weetamoe: "That young man seems to have an imperfect sense of his relation to the universe." Her own sense of that relationship, as it concerned herself and her family, was extraordinary. In every large family, the individual is seldom permitted to take himself too seriously. A pervasive humor, provided it is not ill-natured, contributes largely to this end. My mother's endowment with that element of a rounded character—an element with which my father also was well furnished—did pervade the household. The things that were laughed at, however, deserved to be laughed at—the trivial, mean, and selfish things. There were, besides, many things taken with the fullest measure of seriousness—the things that really mattered. For her these were brought and bound together in a deep sense of religion, by which I mean a humble reliance upon unseen forces, and a confident belief that these outweigh and ultimately control the seen. When I hear Oxford "Groupers" talk of their "silent hours" and their "God-guidance," I wonder if they have found anything more efficacious than Christians of my mother's time and sort found

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

through their private searchings of the Scriptures and their trustful devotion to the constant practice of prayer. I only hope they find as much, and only wish that more of us in this later day could bring the temporal and the spiritual into such a union as that which I am trying to recall. The fruits of this union, as I saw it, were a sense of responsibility joined with cheerfulness, a gratitude for *haec otia* expressing itself in a generous desire to share them, a tolerance of others which was no mere passive accepting of differences, but an active recognition of the right to differ.

A justice, like God's mercy, fain to see  
In every soul an equal weight and worth,  
And, seeing, to withhold from none on earth  
The bread of love, the cup of sympathy.

So, in part, I tried, after my mother's death, to define one of her attributes.

Go back for a moment to the Sunday observances on which I have touched. I am confident now, though I never thought of it at the time, that they were all made to seem reasonable and natural and acceptable because my mother took them all so simply and sincerely as matters of course.

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

The way she did this was the way to make willing churchgoers of her children—not servile followers, through the years of waning orthodoxies, of her beliefs in every detail. We were led, not driven, to feel the richer for some share in a heritage of beauty in word and feeling, in a habitual concern for a better order on earth, in the weekly infusion—and this may have been the greatest gain—of an element of poetry into the prose of life. Though there was a certain amount of precept in all this, it was example that counted, and prevailed. Perhaps we were conformists by nature, but nonconformity, the seed of rebellion, found little to excite its germination and growth. Who would raise the banner of revolt against the sway of such a benignity as that which my mother's character had printed on her face?

Younger than my father by nearly twenty years, she, unlike him, might truly be called Victorian, and in a double sense. It was not merely that the poetry of Tennyson, for example, spoke a language to which her spirit made a warmly sympathetic response. There was something yet more directly Victorian. I cannot see her with a crown on her head. Neither can I see her, indoors, without

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

a white cap of precisely the sort worn by Queen Victoria. I can hardly remember when she did not wear it, for old-ladyhood began early when Victoria ruled her Empire. Not one of those who assumed the Victorian cap could have looked more like the Queen than my mother. One thing happened so often that it became tiresome. Again and again a new acquaintance would ask, quite tentatively, as if unsure that the question would be welcome, "Has anyone ever told you, Mrs. Howe, that you bear a strong resemblance to Queen Victoria?" So strong it was that an old Englishman, a simple soul, who lived in a cottage on our way to church in Bristol, used to seat himself every Sunday morning by the roadside to be reminded, when we drove by, of his former sovereign. "Extraordinary likeness!" he once remarked, with an added phrase which became a family byword: "No lineament is lacking." Is it strange that the word "Victorian" and its implications do not distress me unduly?

It is not of outward appearances, however, but of an interior essence and a resulting atmosphere, even a climate, that I am thinking. Here, as I have suggested, the "ordinary guy" did seem to lack

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

some of our advantages. There were others which he possessed, and we were lucky to share in them. Certainly our life was not so completely tribal as I have made it appear. Among the boys who lived in the town or visited it every summer there were many and good friends. The family parties at the farm—birthday celebrations and clambakes true to Rhode Island tradition—were by no means the only diversions. There were local and summer-visiting girls enough to provide an element indispensable for a “crowd.” Sailing, picnic, and tennis parties, and in due time dances in a bare little hall, took their places in a happy routine.

Of Bristol itself in the later decades of the nineteenth century a word must be said. It had not then become either a suburb of Providence or a mill town doubled in size, as it now is, by operatives of Latin origin. It was a small New England community, self-contained and self-sufficient, yet with a difference from most New England towns. The climate was gentle—physically, socially, theologically. The traditional harshness of New England Puritanism must have been tempered by the firm establishment of the Church of England in the town long before the Revolution, and by the



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

vigorous continuance of its tradition and worship through the century that followed. The place became a veritable nursery of bishops and other clergy, too many to enumerate.

Nearly everybody was related to nearly everybody else, and my father was much more commonly accosted as "Cousin Mark" than as "Bishop Howe." A valued coachman at the Weetamoe of my earliest days was a distant kinsman of our own—as he was, more nearly, of certain Vanderbilts. The first town clerk of Bristol, one Richard Smith, was an ancestor of many local families, of high and low degree, besides that of my father's mother. There was something Southern in this pervading sense of kinship, as there was also in the best architecture of the town. It was no misnomer to define as "mansions" several DeWolf houses, of which only one has survived the ravages of fire and decay. Why should this Southern aspect have not prevailed? One of the best houses in Charleston, considered highly characteristic of the place, belonged to a Nathaniel Russell who had gone there from Providence and is said to have employed the Bristol builder, Russell Warren,—he would have been called an "architect" in later days,—to erect his

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

mansion, containing just such a "flying staircase" as he made in more than one house in his own town. Beyond Charleston there was Cuba, with which Bristol, in its shipping days, had many relations. Not only did a frescoed wall in the stateliest of the DeWolf houses represent a Cuban plantation belonging to its owner, but in the circle of my juvenile friends the very names of the "Smith boys," Juan and Ricardo, smacked of the Caribbean. Then there was that paragon of the art of self-defense, later a distinguished physician in New York, Ramon Guiteras, son of a West Indian father and a mother of old Bristol stock. I wonder even whether my own "given" names, "Mark Antony," were not of West Indian origin. The progenitor of all the Rhode Island DeWolfs, who signed himself "Mark Anthony D'Wolf," came to Bristol from the island of Guadeloupe in 1744. His father, of the third generation of his family in Connecticut, had gone to that colony of France early in the 1700's. Marc-Antoine was a common French name in the eighteenth century. It is merely a guess of my own that a Guadeloupe De Wolf might naturally have bestowed it, anglicized, upon his son. This Mark Anthony and his Bristol wife, Abigail Potter, pro-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

duced fifteen children, and their descendants are as the sands of a small sea. If their gifts were derived from him, his own must indeed have been diverse, for among the progeny, roughly in my own generation, such various figures as Ralph Barton Perry, Charles Dana Gibson, James DeWolf Perry, and DeWolf Hopper must be counted.

New England as Bristol was by my many tokens, it was New England plus. Elsie Venner's exotic cousin Dick would perhaps have been more at home there than in the Berkshires. The romantic past of the place was fading away in my youth, but an aura remained.

It was withal an age of innocence. The psychology of sex must have existed then, but nobody was studying it, and what a pioneer investigator of the subject would have made of us all I am quite at a loss to know. The "demon rum" was a more patent peril, especially on the "Glorious Fourth," for which Bristol was famous. There is a legend, with a basis of fact, that on the afternoon of one of these unbridled days a spirited youth, then just out of his teens and now for many years a most respectable member of society, was discov-

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

ered on his knees in prayer at the head of a pier from which many sailing parties used to set forth, and a little later became the *corpus vile* at a funeral service conducted by a judge who was yet to become a national figure. Here the Bristol blend of this world and the next came to full flower. Much was forgiven on the Fourth, celebrated in the morning with an imposing procession—in which “Antiques and Horribles,” the venerable coach in which Senator James D’Wolf (“Captain Jim”) used to drive to Washington, the Governor of the State, and officers and men from a naval vessel anchored in the harbor, in honor of the occasion, were wont to take part. I shudder to think what would have happened if a procession in which President Grant, cigar in mouth, drove through the town with General Burnside, a summer resident, had fallen on the Fourth of July and not, as it did, in August.

Of conviviality at other times, be it said that the cocktail had not yet arrived, and the claret punches and beer which flowed with some freedom on certain occasions seemed to work no memorable havoc. My mother’s antipathy to strong drink must have been an agency for moderation. My


## *A Venture in Remembrance*

father had a milder feeling of repugnance to tobacco, and found small pleasure in seeing each of his sons, one after the other, take up the "filthy habit." Among the sharers of our pleasures in the town was one youth with a marked talent for the stage, "Eddie" (Edward Fales) Coward, known in the New York of his earlier years as an amateur actor hardly distinguishable from a professional. I always wished our cousinship was nearer. To his energy and charm many theatricals were due, and none of us tired of his imitation of Dixey in "Adonis." In his train came friends from New York—among them Robert Taber, not yet known for his association, theatrical and matrimonial, with Julia Marlowe. The Aspinwall boys, "Willie" and "Lloydy," more magnificent than most of us, the Gibson boys, Dana and Langdon, all with Bristol roots that mingled with ours, paid their annual visits. Through the college years Columbia, Yale, and Brown—and consequently the region between New York and Providence—provided the winter backgrounds of which we were most conscious. But for one or two Bristolians who went to Harvard, Boston and Cambridge might never have existed for us. It never occurred to me

## *Boyhood Summers in Rhode Island*

that I might become a Bostonian myself, with a certain interest in learning. It is a sobering thought that Professors Dana C. Munro and James R. Jewett were boys in Bristol at the same time with me, and that I had the misfortune hardly to know them. They may well have been more profitably employed than I was. But I wonder whether they keep among their memories the counterpart of one of mine. I had to return, one year, to Reading before the rest of the family, to enter for a short time as a boarder at the school in which I was ordinarily a day-scholar. Before starting for the boat which was to take me to Fall River, I resolved with all the force of my earliest teens that I should betray none of the emotion I felt. The farewells were made with proper dignity. I mounted the carriage, and waved good-bys from the driveway. No sooner had I passed between the stone posts at its entrance than I burst into a flood of uncontrollable, mortifying tears. I have told what it was to arrive at Weetamoe. It was this to leave it.

*Pennsylvania School-Days*


 EVERYONE who peers into his own past tries to recall the earliest of all his memories. Most of mine go back to Bristol—where the September Gale of 1869 made an indelible impression on one who had recently passed his fifth birthday and, sitting on a chair by the east end of the dining-room sideboard, felt the house shake, and saw—or thinks he saw—the fall of the “big willow,” a main support of “the swing.” The delicious terror of high flights projected by the “run-under” of an older brother belonged to the same period. Earlier than that, however, is a Philadelphia memory, my closest link with the Civil War, which came to its end before I could possibly remember anything—when eight months of infancy had passed over my head. What survives is a clear remembrance that somebody held me up at a front window of our house on Eleventh Street at the south corner of Clinton, while lines and lines of blue-coated soldiers marched by. The main armies had of course

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

returned from the South some time before any such spectacle could have printed itself on my mind. The fact probably is that the troops I saw were returning from one of the states in which the horrid process of Reconstruction had claimed their presence. I could wish for a more heroic association with the forces of the North.

Another Philadelphia memory is that of my first day in any school. A silver plate marked "HOUGH" on the door of a house on Spruce Street just below Broad remained for many years to remind me, on visits to Philadelphia, of the Quaker sisters who superintended my earliest steps in formal education. Everything they said and did has vanished. What I remember is that on the very first morning of my schooling another boy—I believe his name was Sam Bell—allowed me to share the bunch of grapes he had brought for his own refreshment at "recess." Such little nameless acts are unremembered only by those who perform them.

Then, when I was eight years old, we moved to Reading, and for several years the school of Miss Hettie Benade was the scene of my elementary studies. "Miss Hettie" was an excellent and



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

beloved teacher, whose interest in her pupils continued long after they passed beyond her special care. By some miracle of survival a small book of "Exercises," of which I should like to repudiate the composition, in the school year of 1872-1873, is still in my possession. I find in these attempts at expression antedating all others no vestige of precocity, and a nearly complete lack of imagination. In fact, there are clear suggestions of a horrid little prig: matter-of-fact, a conformist, an optimist. "The Description of Our Schoolroom" pictures the best of possible schoolrooms in the best of possible worlds. There is, to be sure, a trace of realism in the "Description of Myself." Here it appears, on a December page, that "I was slideing out on Fourth street, and fell down very hard, and hurt myself very much, I can feel it whenever I stoop down." What did the young hero look like? "I have got long dark brown hair," he wrote, "and big ears which every one say. I have large fat hands for my age which are getting very much chapped."

What I should have liked to find in these earliest records, or in any others, is some allusion to an affliction which has beset me from my earliest days of speech—the affliction of stammering. Of

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

course it was a constant handicap in every school and college classroom, involving all manner of allowances and exemptions on my behalf, and, when the time came for taking part in the activities for which I was otherwise fitted, requiring frequent recourse to kind friends for the reading of my own productions in prose and verse. President Coolidge was credited with declaring that he was never injured by the things he did not say. I have often felt that the things I could not say at the appropriate moment would have been profitable. In fact, I have never been able to persuade myself that the pen is mightier than the tongue, or to seek mere "leave to print" without inward rebellion. There has been one alleviating thought—that my contemporaries, through a merciful interposition of Providence, have probably been spared a liberal contribution to the flow of public speech, from one perhaps too much addicted to talk in private.

For the sake of other sufferers from the same affliction, I ought to say a little more. Family tradition places the origin of a tendency to stuttering several generations back in one line of our descent. Something of the sort is needed to account

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

for the fact that in my own and the next succeeding generation there are four victims of the tendency. In my case it began with my first need of words. I should like to recover some clever, amusingly illustrated verses which an older brother in the Navy sent home one Christmas. They depicted "the Calender," or "Cal," as I was nicknamed—not for the great Genevan but for the good friend of a nursery favorite, John Gilpin—in the writhing process of getting out a word. This was taken for granted as a family joke, and, though I do not remember resenting it, I cannot help feeling now that the very fact of taking such a thing lightly for granted was bad. Still worse, I believe, were the methods employed by my father and another older brother in trying to help me. Of course they had the best and kindest intentions in the world, but it was then a world in which the first principles of child psychology were quite unknown in the ordinary family circle. My father was a firm believer in the power of the will. He could think of nothing better to say to me, even before strangers in whose presence I began to hesitate, than, "Now, use your will—you can say it if you will only use your will." Of course that was the last extremity

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

**Main**

of provocation to complete rigidity, embarrassed silence, and the fixing of a bad habit.

For light upon my father rather than myself, I copy here a memorandum, in his own handwriting, which I have recently encountered among his papers: “ ‘The longer I live, the more certain I am,’ said Sir T. Fowell Buxton, ‘that the great difference between men, the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is energy and invincible determination—a purpose once fixed, and then death, or victory. That quality will do anything that can be done in this world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities will make a two-legged creature a man without it.’ *Found in Memoir of Chas. Kingsley.*”

One year I was taken out of school for some weeks, another out of college, for purported “cures.” In these, and in later experiments of the same sort, the patients were taught rhythmic and other tricks, which, together with tedious vocal exercises, seemed for a time to work a certain improvement—but always, alas! only for a time. It is now twenty years since I made the last of these ventures. Had it come when I was in my teens or twenties instead of my fifties, the string

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

of my tongue might well have been loosed. Even then the knot was partially untied—not primarily through new variations of voice production but by placing the emphasis of treatment where it belonged, on one's general state of mind. Fear and self-consciousness were the real troublemakers, not any physical defect. Effort and the driving power of will were the lions in the path. The lame man accepts his lameness and uses a crutch or cane without apologies. If an affected deliberation of speech is such a crutch, why not use it, and even speak of it, as a discourager of a more painful hesitancy? Applying this principle on one occasion, when I could not decently avoid making an after-dinner speech of more than a few words, I prepared a song into which I could break at any moment, and warned my hearers that this might happen. The result was magical. The speech, of about ten minutes, proceeded to its close without a really disconcerting hitch. It was not a brilliant speech, but the company, well aware of the chances I was taking, behaved precisely as if it were—simply, I am sure, because I kept going. Perhaps I should add that this happened before the full effects of a strange experience had worn them-

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

selves away—the experience of a grave illness in a hospital for thirteen weeks, through the entire course of which there was not a single hesitation of speech in abundant talk with doctors, nurses, visiting family, and friends. Extreme weakness stood in the way of any effort. One succeeded first and last only because one did *not* “try, try again.” Old adages go by the board before a psychology unknown in my youth. All this is related not in any pride of accomplishment, for that has been lamentably meager. I tell it especially in the interest of parents who may find themselves able to forestall infinite misery by dealing with the minds rather than the tongues of their children. Let them be spared, if they possibly can, the countless restrictions and humiliations that befall one who finds the crowning advantage of man over the beast lodged with him often useless.

Making the best, then, of a bad business,—a task continued through life,—I had my preparation for college at a school established in Reading by my father. Beginning as the “Diocesan School of Central Pennsylvania,” it became “Selwyn Hall.” There was sound teaching, especially in the classics, but the school fell considerably short

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

of its founder's ambition for it, which was to create in the Middle States something analogous to St. Paul's at Concord, New Hampshire, to which my next older brother had been sent. Unhappily, no Dr. Coit was ever enticed to Reading, and while Selwyn Hall was languishing "Church schools" were beginning to prosper elsewhere. Was it because they were in Massachusetts, at Groton and Southborough, instead of in the interior of Pennsylvania, where, to be sure, the Hill School, not of the "Church" variety, was getting on its feet? Or did my father's capacity for leadership and organization, which had served him well in other matters, fail him here? I suspect that both causes were operative, but that the larger share of anxiety and loss could be traced to the second.

It is no mere filial piety that leads me to ascribe administrative capacity to my father. After his death a sermon in his memory was preached at Reading by Bishop Henry C. Potter—of whose father, Bishop Alonzo Potter, my father had been both an admiring younger friend and the biographer. In this discourse he was credited with "the most various aptitudes of leadership and guidance." Beyond that, Bishop Potter told his hearers

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

that a sermon on the text, "Young man, I say unto thee arise," which as a "wayward youth" he had heard my father preach, started in him the train of thought and emotion which led him into the ministry. None knew better than my father's sons what stimulus his words and spirit could impart to youth. President E. Benjamin Andrews of Brown knew him in his old age as a member of the Brown Corporation, and wrote in a letter, which I believe has never been published: "He did not, as so many people of advancing years do, criticize the present sourly in comparison with old times." Perhaps he had come to know how much there is to criticize in every generation.

For my own, in the Reading years of boyhood, I must say that outside of school we ought to have realized more clearly the industrial importance of our surroundings, and the unrest beneath the pleasant surface of things. We were conscious of the troubles that agitated the coal-mining regions higher up the Schuylkill Valley only because the name of the "Molly Maguires" had become a local name of terror. The "Panic" sled of the time and place suggested another contemporary terror, which seemed no more immediate.



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Only once, when we returned to Reading in September of 1877 and found an encampment of soldiers in the grounds of the railroad station, did the bloody Railroad Strikes of that summer become real to us. We learned that troops, summoned to restore order, and marching through the city in an open cut for the Reading Railroad tracks, had been attacked by the strikers, who hurled missiles on them from above, and called their fire, with resulting carnage. Had coal and iron, instead of the Church, meant as much at home as they did in the households of many relatives and friends, there would have been more discussion of such matters. As it was, I cannot remember any feeling among my elders that possibly the Church was failing to bring about that condition of good will on earth which was a central aim of its existence. I am sure that the sense of social responsibility, if not yet shown forth in impressive achievement, is appreciably greater today in circles corresponding with those of my youth.

Our own remoteness from the harsher realities may be measured by some of the things I remember most clearly. Among these were the visits of the Reverend Doctor John Henry Hopkins of

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

Williamsport in my father's diocese. He was the son and namesake of Bishop Hopkins of Vermont, who, during the Civil War, had defended slavery as an institution supported by the authority of the Bible, and had called forth from my father a vigorous pamphlet in opposition to this view. The son, a pronounced high-churchman, was in frequent conflict with my father in diocesan conventions, but held the episcopal office in such respect that on crossing our threshold for a visit he would drop on one knee and kiss the ring on my father's hand, an attention which its recipient accepted only with some control of the muscles of hand and arm. Dr. Hopkins was nevertheless a charming guest, especially to the young. He was a poet of sorts, and a real musician. An Easter carol of his composition, which he used to sing to us—"Fie, old Roman, why tell a lie?"—may be less familiar today than it once was; but whenever I hear the carolers on Beacon Hill at Christmastime singing "We three Kings of Orient are," in the fond belief that the words and music have come down to them from the antiquity of England, I like to recall the bearded Dr. Hopkins sitting in our Reading parlor at the piano, which now for many years

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

has been my own, and singing this carol for which he had made both the words and the music less than twenty years before. Another possession is a small green volume,—once my father's,—*Carols, Hymns, and Songs*, by John Henry Hopkins (New York, 1882), containing both the carols to which I have referred and also one beginning,


Come, and I will sing you,—  
What will you sing me?—  
I will sing you One-O,

and proceeding from the “One-O” of “God alone” to the “Twelve-O” of the “Twelve Apostles,” through many such gradations as the “lily-white Babes clothed all in green-O,” the “cheerful waiters,” and the “ferryman in his boat,” figures of provocative mystery to the childish imagination. Specialists in folk song may learn from Dr. Hopkins’s book how he picked up the words and music from children in Essex, N. Y., who had heard it sung by Cornish copper-miners on Lake Superior. All I know about it is that its appeal persisted for my own children. Another clerical visitant to Reading,—the Reverend Richard B. Duane, then of Honesdale,—besides giving me, at eight, a col-

## *Pennsylvania School-Days*

ored picture history of England,—which has been my own longer than any other book in my library,—stored my memory with the song of “Johnny Schmoker.” Its “*Ich kann spiele*,” with imitations of various instruments in a band, was valued perhaps even more highly than the “Twelve Apostles” by the children for whose beginnings in music I have been responsible.

*Lehigh and Harvard*

S BISHOP of his diocese my father was, *ex officio*, President of the Board of Trustees of Lehigh University. This fact, and the nearness of Bethlehem to Reading, sent me to Lehigh rather than to Brown—the natural *alma mater* of my grandfather, of my father himself (a tutor in Greek soon after his graduation in 1828, and through many later years a member of the Corporation), and of three of my older brothers, to say nothing of sundry Rhode Island kinsmen. Lehigh had opened its doors only late in the sixties, and had just lived its first twenty years when I received my degree in 1886. Already, however, it had become “old Lehigh” in the eyes of its sons—even as anybody over seventy may pass for eighty-five with the young.

The college—called a university from the first—owed its origin to Asa Packer, who, in rising “from scratch” to the presidency of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, had amassed a fortune, a substan-

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

tial portion of which he applied, during his lifetime and by bequest, to ensuring, primarily for boys of the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, opportunities for education denied to his own youth. Tuition was free, and remained so until the Lehigh Valley Railroad, in which the funds of the college were invested, fell into financial troubles, long after my days in Bethlehem. While I was there the academic freedom from any reliance upon tuition fees was such that the number of my classmates was cut from ninety at entrance to thirty-seven at graduation. Technical science of various sorts was then, as it always has been, the chief subject of study. The zeal of students who were definitely fitting themselves to earn their living pervaded the place. There was a considerable choice of courses, leading to different degrees, but within each course the range of electives was narrow. A candidate for the Bachelor of Arts degree had to carry his mathematics into the field of astronomical calculations, and his Latin and Greek, continued through all of his four years, did not stop short of Lucretius and the odes of Pindar. In my class there was only one other aspirant for the arts degree, with the result that we received the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

intensive instruction of full professors of the ancient languages, one of whom, W. A. Lamberton, was a truly learned Grecian. It was something to be taught, as I was in mathematics, to work hard at subjects which I did not enjoy: here was a lesson that has served many of my generation well through the years that have followed college. Mr. Justice Holmes reminds us that one needs not to know Latin and Greek, but does need to have forgotten them. This educational test I am well qualified to meet, but I cannot help feeling that it would have been better to retain something of the Greek, of which I have kept almost nothing. Here I blame both myself and my teachers, who would doubtless have denied what I believe to be the truth—that they cared considerably more for the letter than for the spirit of their subject. It does not so much distress me that I should not recognize a logarithm were I to meet it on the street as that my bowing acquaintance with a few Greek verbs has been narrowed almost to extinction.

A small American college in the eighties that was acquiring a reputation for the value of its degrees did not offer much encouragement to idle-

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

ness. Yet there were plenty of occasions to apply Dean Briggs's motto *Dulce et decorum est desipere in loco*. The intimate life of the fraternities, to which many of us belonged, yielded the pleasure and profit—and the same temptations—which are found in all such associations of college youth. There was more drinking and general looseness of living than one would choose for a rising generation, as I suspect there was in most other colleges of the time. When I went later to Harvard, seasoned by four undergraduate years, there seemed to be less of the sort of thing which one did not naturally write home about, but this difference may well have been only apparent, for as a late-comer I was less advantageously placed to observe all that was going on. Certainly at Lehigh there was no lack of pleasant extracurricular employment. It must have been relatively easy to assume the proportions of a large frog in a small puddle. To enumerate my involvements in undergraduate activities might well lay me open to charges of a vanity which I am vain enough to disclaim. I prefer to touch here upon friendships and contacts related to such associations. After all, the backgrounds I am trying to evoke would be bleak



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

without the personalities that gave them their color.

To Lehigh I brought a certain, scantily tutored, interest in music. There had been piano lessons at home, and singing of the sort already mentioned. Only once had I heard a Symphony concert, when Theodore Thomas brought his orchestra to Reading. I had served my term as a choir-boy, properly banged on the head with a hymnal by the choirmaster while a processional was forming. I was not long in college, however, before I realized how closely music might be related to life—and to death. Whenever a member of the Moravian congregation at Bethlehem died, four trombone players would mount the belfry of the Moravian Church, with its 1803 weather-vane, and set the harmonies of German chorales rolling round the hillsides near the town. If I was told about the musical tradition which had already flourished in Bethlehem for nearly a century and a half, I was not particularly impressed. It took the emergence of a person from the general background to breathe reality into the sense of music as an important part of life. This person was a young Moravian musician, J. Fred Wolle, only a

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

little my senior, who undertook to train the small college Glee Club of which I became the leader. Wolle was also the organist of a Bethlehem church of which my brother-in-law was the rector. For at least one year I sang in the choir of that church, where a hymn, of my own most conventional composition, now fortunately lost except from my own memory, was often sung. I can imagine what Wolle thought of it—as also of the songs in which he trained the Glee Club. The “Arion” songbook and certain English glees provided the most ambitious numbers on our programs. A Davison would then have been as premature at Harvard as at Lehigh, for there we had the first conductor and the real creator of the Bethlehem Bach Festivals, and he did not carry us beyond “Who will o’er the downs so free.” He did, however, teach us the satisfactions to be found in taking a personal part in the rendering of pretty good music, and for that lesson I doubt not my colleagues on the Glee Club have shared my long-surviving gratitude. Fred Wolle left with us, besides, a standard of modesty, simplicity, and purity of devotion to his art which one cannot appreciate too soon or cherish too long.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Another personality, quite different in character and touching my undergraduate life at a large number of points, was a Lehigh classmate better known to the world at large than any other—Richard Harding Davis. We were fellow editors of the college paper the *Lehigh Burr*; fellow halfbacks (unless my memory unsupported by records is quite at fault) in the first intercollegiate game of football played at Lehigh—when the University of Pennsylvania sophomores defeated the Lehigh sophomore team, 16 to 0; fellow members of two college clubs, the purely social “Arcadia” and the dramatic “Mustard and Cheese,” both of which owed their origin to Davis. We might have been “fraternity brothers” also had not Davis, I believe, declined election to virtually every fraternity in the college, on the perfectly tenable ground that he did not believe in the scheme of undergraduate life they represented. His unwavering and cheerful addiction to ginger ale was typical of a general protest against many points of conduct in the life that surrounded him. He laid himself open, often foolishly, to ridicule, but there was an inherent integrity about him which only his intimates could appreciate to the

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

full. It was my good fortune to become one of them.

My acquaintance with Dick Davis began a year before we started on our course together, and after a fashion which proved characteristic. I had entered college a year before he did, but after three months of lodging in the house of a South Bethlehem native, under hygienic conditions of incredible, prehistoric menace, contracted a typhoid fever which brought my first freshman year to an untimely end, and narrowly missed doing the same by me. Almost immediately upon making this false start as an undergraduate I received a formal note, addressed "Mr. Howe," and signed "Yours respec. Richard H. Davis, Caledonian T C," challenging me to a match at tennis. "I suggest further," the note (which has chanced to survive) went on to say, "that one of Reach's two dollar (\$.2.) racquets be played for, half of that money to be supplied by each man. And that an account of the match be sent to the college paper and the *Bethlehem Times*." It was hoped that my acceptance of the challenge would be received "at an early date either conditionally or unconditionally." As it turned out, Davis did not win the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

match, nor did the winner receive his "racquet," nor was the game described in print. It should be remembered that the challenge came from a sub-freshman, living with his uncle, Professor Harding of Lehigh, and preparing himself for college at a local fitting school. He was very young, and exceedingly "fresh." If I call the episode characteristic, it is only to suggest a frank liking for the limelight, so naïve as hardly to be objectionable, and tempered but never wholly extinguished in the few following years through which I knew him well and held him in affectionate friendship.

His younger brother, Charles Belmont Davis, joined the class next below that in which Dick and I became classmates, and since I have mentioned one brother in connection with tennis, I should not fail to mention the other. Through our three years in college together we always met in the finals of the college tournament, and after a lively battle Charley Davis always won. As the college pair, he and I represented Lehigh in two inter-collegiate tournaments—at Hartford and New Haven. I will not boast of our prowess beyond saying that we advanced beyond the earliest stages

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

in each of these contests, and at Hartford had the satisfaction of taking one set from Sears and Taylor, the Harvard team then the national champions, before they put us out of the running. They would not have dealt so gently with Yale, I suspect, as they did with such a freshwater opponent as Lehigh.

On my second entrance to college, in the class with the elder Davis, there was an immediate challenge to class loyalty. Under which flag, Bezonian? Should I enter the Cane Rush, that Homeric contest in which the entire sophomore class tried to remove one cane from the entire freshman class, as a member of the first or of the second? I chose the second, the Class of 1886, with which I was to graduate. Only once in all my association with Lehigh was I hailed with such enthusiasm as upon joining the ranks of the freshmen on that autumn afternoon in 1882, when we were victorious in the struggle, at the end of which one classmate, William Sayre, a cousin of the present High Commissioner to the Philippines, was denuded of every stitch of clothing except his shoes and stockings, and was smuggled home through the dusk in a borrowed ulster.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Thirty years after my graduation I returned to Lehigh to receive an honorary degree. Then came my second moment of high acclaim—not at the Commencement exercises, but while I was watching a game of baseball with Lafayette. A batsman struck a foul that flew high, very high, into the air. As it began to fall I saw it was coming in my direction. All eyes were upon it—and upon me, for it was dropping as if it held the very number of my seat. At the supreme moment, I rose, lifted my bare hands, and—thank heaven!—caught it. There was no such applause at the later time when my honorary degree was awarded. I would almost rather have had it withheld at the last moment than to have muffed that ball.

Davis left Lehigh at the end of his junior year for special studies at Johns Hopkins. Our paths had run parallel in many respects. I may be hazy about our respective positions in that first game of intercollegiate football, but I know that we were both on the team, that the game was played in a downpour of rain on a field of mud,—was not my open mouth completely filled with it by a Pennsylvania player, Tilghman by name, who included my face in his tackling when I was catch-

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

ing the ball for a "free kick"?—and I remember well that Davis insisted upon our all stopping at the "studio" of a tintype photographer on our way home and sitting, mud-stained and dripping, on a curbstone while he took our picture. Davis had a passion for exposure to the camera, as who would not with such dashing good looks as his, and with such a passion also for striking and various apparel? A classmate of Clyde Fitch's at Amherst, the late Robert A. Woods, told me years ago that Fitch had a similar passion as an undergraduate, with similar effects upon his contemporaries. Certainly Davis, attending classes in gloves, with a crooked cane over his arm, and clad in raiment quite exotic in the Bethlehem of his time, could not escape invidious comment. This was by no means confined to the collegians, for town was quite as critical as gown. An elaborate ceremony of the cremation of calculus marked the end of our studies in that subject. Davis did not go so far in mathematics, but in the torchlight procession that expressed the joy of our release, he marched by my side. I could hear groups of boys, as we neared them, cry out, "Here comes Davis!", and as we passed them a volley of objects harder than words would fly out from the



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

sidewalk. Davis's friends had to join him now and then in dodging attacks of various sorts.

There was one attack which I had forgotten completely until the *Adventures and Letters of Richard Harding Davis* (1917), edited by his brother, brought it to my mind. This adventure was described by Dick, a freshman, in a letter to his father. A number of sophomores had tried to haze him on one rainy February night as he came out of the local theater. He refused to be hazed, but offered to fight any one of his tormentors. A general mêlée ensued, in which he was badly pummeled, but established himself in the whole community as a man of spirit. His friends had received warning of what might be in store for him, and tried to rally a company of defenders from the freshman class. "Howe went all over town," wrote Davis in his letter home, "after putting on his old clothes, in case of personal damage, in search of freshmen who were at home out of the wet." It is futile to wish now that I had been a little less careful of what may have been my single suit of decent clothing. When Davis's fight was over, it appears that another classmate and I took him to our rooms, where his chief defender left him to get

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

some beefsteak for his eye, and to treat other rescuers to beer.

On one occasion we attacked each other, though in sham battle. Every year the sophomore class produced a volume, *The Epitome*, intended to mingle information with humor. Davis was chairman, and I was a member, of the committee entrusted with it in 1884. Somebody conceived what was thought the brilliant idea that each member of the committee should contribute an anonymous biographical sketch of another member. Davis fell to my lot, and I to his. This was my first attempt at biography, and a flat little performance it was. I charged my friend with "getting as little work as possible into ten hours a week," and went on to say: "He is taking what is known as the 'Davis Special Course,' which consists principally of English Literature, as a critic of which he soon intends to rival Macaulay. All students taking this course are on all occasions obliged to wear knickerbockers, an ulster, and a Tam o'Shanter, and to smoke a straight briarwood pipe." In this equipment, of which all the items were well ahead of their time in the Bethlehem of that day, I might have included a Norfolk jacket. Davis, with a less pic-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

turesque subject, did his job more picturesquely, as an ampler quotation from his sketch will testify:—

Mr. Howe was born, at a very early period of his existence, in Bristol, R. I. He is a direct descendant of Mark Antony, the celebrated politician and stump speaker, and whose name, along with those of a few other generals, he bears.

The first event of note in Mr. Howe's career occurred on the day of his baptism, when he was christened Mark Antony De Wolfe Howe, Jr. Many another weaker nature would have dropped under this burden; but though the effort to support the misanthropic character of three such war-like cognomens has embittered a naturally sunny nature, it has not destroyed that reputation for morality which stands as pure and high as his collars.

The dissipations he encountered while in that gay and wicked Paris of America, Philadelphia, were counteracted by the culture and refinement of Reading, Pa., and an enforced sojourn with the present Junior Class for three months failed to contaminate him. At the University he shines as an instructor of music as well as a student. . . .

He is noted more especially for the introduction of the "Howe" walking-stick, the style of which would have been more widely followed had his friends discovered the wood pile from which it was selected. . . .

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

On the college paper, of which we were both editors, Davis showed a capacity for journalism quite surpassing anything his colleagues could offer. One of them was Kenneth Frazier, of the class next below us, and I like to remember that it fell to me to write verses to accompany the capital drawings, unblushingly in the manner of Du Maurier, which gave the first public intimations of Frazier's place among American artists. Davis's place among writers was established by his "Van Bibber" stories, and these were foreshadowed in the sketches of one "Conway Maur"—frequently "reaching for the tobacco"—which appeared in the *Lehigh Burr*. We all knew that he had something which the rest of us did not possess. In appearance he was already cut out to become, as he did, the perfect "Gibson man" of many drawings by his friend Charles Dana Gibson, and through his early writings to grow into a recorder and interpreter of those "gay nineties" of which he was so typical a representative. Even in his college days it was less as a writer of fiction than as an observer and reporter of facts that he appeared at his best. His many week-end excursions to Philadelphia and New York provided him with abundant material for lively, oral report upon the stage and the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

press, with both of which he had already many contacts. For one, I know that what I learned at Lehigh owed a large and cherished element to him. I used to hear afterward that others of the Lehigh circle took umbrage at his giving the impression in some of his stories that his college days had been passed under the elms of "dear old Princeton." After all, these stories were fiction, not fact, and Davis's instinct for popular appeal told him truly that the imagination of his readers would respond more actively to the venerable Princeton than to the infant Lehigh.

For all that I learned at Lehigh, from books and from friends, there was one thing that I did not learn, either there or at home, and I believe it was typical of the conditions, shared by many, in which I grew up. It was really more than not learning to place any special value on riches and worldly success: it was learning to regard them as matters of secondary importance. One had only to ask at home, innocently enough, whether this or that person was "rich," to receive a sharp snubbing—there was a positive vulgarity in raising any such question. It was taken for granted that some

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

of one's best friends were worse and others better off than one's self. The give-and-take element in human relations was not to be measured in material terms. "Such as I have give I thee" is a capital motto for those stationed somewhere between poverty and riches, and I dare say it works well at either extreme.

After this bit of moralizing, let me say that when I came to consider what was to be done with the training I had received in college, it never occurred to me that it might be of use in accumulating a fortune. Perhaps it would have been better to give more thought than I have ever given to such fruits of one's labors. Certainly my parents were setting no such example when they made me realize that I should gratify them exceedingly by studying for the ministry. They seemed to feel sure that all impediments would vanish if I could only respond to a call which, in fact, I could not hear. From another quarter in my family I was urged to heed another call—which again I could not even hear—to the study of medicine. Of all professions, the ministry and medicine are two which should be entered in response to an irresistible inward summons—and lucky the young

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

man to whom it comes. No call quite so imperative as that is needed for a beginner in letters. He may not know precisely which corner of that wide field he may be capable of cultivating to advantage—the writing of books, journalism, publishing. He may yet feel, as I did after four years at Lehigh, that a life concerned with letters in one form or another presents strong attractions for one of his individual tastes. There was nobody at hand to utter a note of warning such as that which came from Brooks Adams many years later when I told him that my older son was preparing himself to enter upon editorial work not unlike my own:—“Why do you condemn him to penury?” There was rather a prompting of adventure in my thinking about what was to come next. Regarding my studies of literature I felt, like Columbus in the comic opera, that “Somewhere there’s something that ain’t been seen yet”—something, moreover, that I needed for what might lie ahead. How was I to get it?

What seemed the most promising answer to this question came from Harvard. No Lehigh man before me, I believe, had ever gone there as a graduate student. It seemed as remote as Oxford

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

or the English Cambridge. In my summers and through the games of tennis I had made the casual acquaintance of a few, perhaps half a dozen, Harvard undergraduates. The personal quality of a young graduate of Harvard who came to Lehigh as a gymnasium instructor while I was in college had impressed me strongly. I must have wondered if his own college had imparted anything of the distinction and charm attaching both to his mind and to his person. He illustrated sharply the truth that the young graduates of our universities who go to other institutions as teachers reflect credit on their own institutions by what they are quite as much as by what they know. The name of this unconscious ambassador was William Hale Herrick. He died while I was at Harvard, and before I met his younger brother Robert Herrick, the novelist, who entered Harvard before I left it. When I sent for the catalogues of various universities offering courses in English that might go farther than those at Lehigh—Yale, Columbia, Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, besides Harvard—the names of teachers meant even less to me than the descriptions of courses. Perhaps I thought that if Herrick had studied under Child and Hill at



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Harvard I might do worse than follow his example. The names of these scholars and of their younger colleagues, Briggs and Wendell, were names, and nothing more. The subjects they were teaching did appeal to me, and, acting entirely upon a "hunch" that Harvard was what I wanted, I set sail on an unknown sea, having assured my parents that I could live on hardtack and maintain myself like any other "grind" before the mast. Such rigors were not literally required of me, but through one year, and then another rendered more manageable by "scholarship aid," I did lead an essentially simple and hard-working life. Immature and unsophisticated as I was, I felt that I had enjoyed my full share of college diversions with the *alma mater* of my earlier allegiance.

The fact that I was never enrolled at Harvard as anything but a graduate student did not deprive me, in 1937, of celebrating at Harvard a fiftieth anniversary of graduation, even as I had done the year before at Lehigh, nor did this double-header quite make a centenarian of me. It was not until Commencement Day of 1887, however, that I became actually a member of the class then graduating, for on that day, in accordance with a system

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

no longer prevailing at Harvard, I received there my second bachelor's degree while my new classmates were taking their first. In the light of later years I see how desirable it was that one who was to live in the neighborhood of Harvard should have some relation with a graduated class. Not long ago I heard some Bostonians, of whom I had become one, engaged in a favorite indoor sport of determining ages by placing one absent friend after another in the class to which he belonged. When one name came up there was a pause. "Oh," said somebody; "he had no class—he went to Yale."

Neither of the successive years for which the degrees of A.B. and A.M. marked the goalposts bore much resemblance to the years of graduate study as they are now organized, for many undergraduates were taking nearly all the courses in which I was enrolled. It must have been with some idea that journalism might be my destiny that I strayed from the main path of English studies into a few courses in economics—"Pol. Econ." it was then called—under Professors Taussig and Laughlin. There was no prophetic adviser to tell me about Norton, and Shaler, and Palmer, and James—and I was incredibly stupid not to find

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

them out for myself, at least in my second Harvard year. Yet it would have been a grievous loss to have had any less of Chaucer and Shakespeare, Milton and Bacon, under a great scholar who could make his scholarship so human and engaging a pursuit as Francis J. Child made it appear to his pupils. The curly-pated, aging cherub gave one to feel that even his nickname of "Stubby" would move his sensitive lips to a smile. Little did I realize that at the very time when I was frequenting his classroom he was writing some of those *Scholar's Letters to a Young Lady* from which, more than thirty years later, it fell to my happy lot to make a book. The fragrance of his roses and of his romantic gallantry, a blended fragrance pervading its pages, was all unguessed by his pupils, but it did not escape Gamaliel Bradford when the letters were printed, for he wrote to me (in 1921): "I am rather an epicure in letters, having made a business as well as a pleasure of them for a great many years,<sup>1</sup> and I do not know of any American letters that are superior to these, if any equal." President Eliot could not so regard them, and,

<sup>1</sup> See *The Letters of Gamaliel Bradford*, 1918-1931, edited by Van Wyck Brooks, p. 53.

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

when I suggested to him one day that their terms of sentiment might have been merely an indulgence in a kind of literary fooling, he stuck to his guns with, "I do not like that kind of literary fooling." The truth was that he liked Child as an ornament of the college faculty and the devoted head of a devoted family so much that the liking could not be extended to include his affectionate frivolity with a charming young lady. This would not have disturbed Child's pupils, who would have seen in it all something of the ineradicable boy that twinkled out from beneath his curls.

Then there was the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, Adams Sherman Hill, known far beyond the confines of Cambridge as the author of "Hill's Rhetoric." It was not until I came, some years later, to know something about the history of Harvard that I discovered what a Bolyston Professor might accomplish. One of Hill's predecessors in this chair was Edward Tyrrel Channing, a brother of William Ellery Channing. There are many testimonies to his influence besides the avowal of Edward Everett Hale that "he deserved the credit of the English of Emerson, Holmes, Sumner, Clarke, Bellows, Lowell, Hig-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

ginson, and other men whom he trained." No Emersons, Holmeses, or Lowells were exposed to the influence of Professor Hill in my brief day under his instruction. It was nevertheless a time when the courses in English composition at Harvard equipped those who took them with a certain competence in writing—a quality which, in comparative terms, expressed itself clearly to one whose business it became to read innumerable manuscripts intended for book or magazine publication. This competence, twenty-five and forty years ago, amounted to an actual superiority which, I must hasten to say, does not seem to have been maintained. What this may signify, with respect to the teaching of English composition both at Harvard and elsewhere, is a large topic, outside the limited scope of these pages.

What Professor Hill did for his pupils was, perhaps more than anything else, to bring them down to earth. His experience as a newspaper writer and editor in the period of the Civil War gave him, I suspect, his special loathing for the superfluous and the unreal. He was a master of deflation. Two instances come to mind. He used to comment, for all the class to hear, on the brief

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

"themes" we had to produce. Running through the latest offerings of an aspiring young writer—later a novelist—he paused one day over a single sheet, remarking only: "H-m—"Sonnet on Night": I think the less we say about that, the better, Mr. So-and-So." On another occasion he was commending a longish poem which, he said, could be read at a single sitting. One man ventured the belief that this was impossible—to which Hill, in his high staccato speech, retorted, "I'm afraid Mr. So-and-So doesn't like to sit." He excelled in the pungent and immediate, as an admirable journalist should, but, in addition to this, he was equipped to deal, historically and critically, with the literature of the English tongue in a manner which gave a peculiar value to his many incidental remarks. There were no special provisions in those days for the study of English writing in one period and American writing in another. It was, however, no fault of Hill's if his pupils did not learn something about the best models in the art of which they themselves were trying to learn the rudiments. Both Child and Hill opened new and exciting vistas to a newcomer whose travels in the realms of gold were just beginning.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

There were two younger men, Briggs and Wendell, to whom the youthful traveler owed much. Each of them, still in his early thirties, seemed as much the "older man" as he remained to the end. Their later honors were all in store for them, for Briggs, in 1886, had just been made an Assistant Professor, and Wendell was still merely an Instructor. In the relation of teacher and pupil it was a pity to have learned so little about Briggs, yet what I learned was a sure foundation for a later and better knowledge of a rare creature—warmly sympathetic, drolly humorous, really learned, supremely modest, and with a true kindness of heart which was bound to make him the generally beloved figure he became. A line of William Watson's described "the scholar's, not the child's, simplicity." Had he been writing of Briggs, it would have read, "the scholar's, *and* the child's, simplicity."

With Barrett Wendell my relations became at once more intimate. Indeed I had been only a few weeks at Harvard when I began to think of him as a friend. I dare say this feeling would not have begun so soon had he not discovered early that I was a younger brother of the clergyman, of his

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

wife's own family connection, who had married him a few years before, and had he not, on the strength of this association, invited me promptly to his house. This of course was merely a beginning. The friendship that ensued had far more substantial grounds. He professed to think well of the "daily themes" which I poured in upon him, and I came soon to value highly the penetrating comments he scrawled upon everything I took to his room in Grays. His extreme sophistication appealed to me as something I had not encountered before. His extravagances of utterance and opinion were as amusing then as I found them through many subsequent years. Who but he, for example, could have looked me over one day not long before his death, and, finding my general appearance a little more orderly than usual, could have exclaimed, in his characteristic inflections, "Mark, you look disgustingly solvent!" From the first I realized that his foolings were surface colorations of a profound inward honesty and seriousness. If my larger commemoration of him, in the book *Barrett Wendell and His Letters*, did not establish this integrity of his, both in his thought and in his friendships, it failed of its chief purpose.



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Wendell did much to make me feel at home in my untried Harvard surroundings. It was not altogether easy at first. There was much for a non-Bostonian to learn. In my first year at Cambridge I made a single excursion into that Boston world of gaiety which did not, as a rule, seem compatible with my studies. I went to a "Harvard Assembly," in a hall on Berkeley Street, on the edge of the South End. For students who could not, or did not, indulge themselves in "hack hire," the only way to get back to Cambridge was to walk to the corner of Charles and Cambridge Streets and wait for the horsecar that trundled out to Harvard Square. It was a bitterly cold night, and after the long walk from Berkeley Hall I found myself shivering on the street corner with two other young men whom I did not know but recognized at once as having been at the very party from which I was returning. They were engaged in animated conversation. I suppose the Lehigh from which I had recently emerged was less like Harvard than like the Yale in which Santayana a few years later was to observe, among the students, a feeling like that of fellow passengers on a ship or fellow countrymen meeting in a

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

foreign land—the unifying feeling of something in common. My instinct was to amalgamate the three strayed revellers with a remark upon the coldness of the night and the suffering in which we shared. But no, I said to myself, let me learn the customs of the country. It was two to one, I thought, and they should take the first step. Did they take it? Not at all. They were happy in their own companionship and left me congealed in my solitude. If I had tried to break the ice, I might have fallen into cold water. On the whole I learned a salutary lesson, such as I might easily have learned in London, or in many another corner of the larger world. A little later I learned also that my silent encounter had been with two brothers named Cabot, one of whom was yet to become an eminent authority on social ethics. What if he had begun on a warmer street corner? That night he helped me to feel that my Pennsylvania Bethlehem was for the moment as far away from Boston as Bethlehem of Judæa.

This is a trifling incident, from which precisely the wrong implication might be drawn. I relate it merely to suggest how much of a cat in a strange garret I once felt in the very atmosphere which,

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

before many years had passed, lent itself to my easiest respiration; and I hasten to say that my early experience of Cambridge and Boston served in general to refute the common belief that a stranger must prepare himself to be received with coldness. As in most civilized communities, there was not much jumping down the throat of a new-comer. Of course it was better to arrive with a few credentials, the more acceptable if presented by one who was disposed to find some congeniality in the prevailing interests of the region. How it may be to-day I cannot say so confidently. Fifty years ago there was a vitality in the intellectual, artistic, political, and religious life stemming from Harvard which provided abundant excitement to inquiring spirits.

If I could have imagined in that long boyhood of mine that my first serious attempt at biography was to be a brief life of Phillips Brooks, I should have made more of my opportunities in Cambridge. Through my second year at Harvard I lived on the third floor of Wadsworth House, directly over the "Preachers' Room" which Brooks and the other University preachers occupied during their visits to the college. We were urged to call upon them

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

freely, yet I never knocked at his door. My father and he had been friends in Philadelphia, and, with a number of other clergymen, had shouldered shovels together to make earthworks of defense for the city when Lee was invading Pennsylvania. Of course he would have received me with all kindness. I suppose it was my halting speech that confirmed my hesitation to intrude upon him. It was his fluent, glowing speech, and the use he made of it in a stirring, enlarging call to the spirit, which drew me irresistibly to the services in Appleton Chapel. These had just been made voluntary. In contrast to the compulsory daily services at Lehigh,—in a cheerless chapel up two long flights in a building approached by an exhausting hill at a barbarously early hour,—the chapel services at Harvard seemed a priceless luxury. I believe I had never seen a Unitarian before coming to Cambridge—and little thought that the affiliations of my future wife were to be with that body which some wicked wag has called “the feather bed of falling Christians.” Edward Everett Hale and other Harvard preachers of his faith opened my eyes to the folly of taking any such definition too seriously. But it was Phillips Brooks, condemned by his

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

own brethren thereafter for tolerating just such preachers, who opened my eyes widest of all. His physical bigness and beauty, his extraordinary power of torrential yet perfectly constructed utterance, were unique implements for achieving his own ideal of the deliverance of "truth through personality." But of all that Harvard had to give I felt then, and still feel, that Phillips Brooks carried in his hands a gift of unsurpassable richness. To him more than to anyone else, excepting only my mother, I have owed my belief, still strongly held, that, if the material forces of life are not to wreck the world, the spiritual forces must hold them in check, indeed control them. As I have grown older and maintained my personal preferences, the precise form in which these forces shall express themselves has come to seem relatively unimportant.

Such enjoyments as teachers and the chapel afforded were accessible to all. It was my good fortune at Cambridge to taste, besides, the pleasures of a young editor. When I came to Harvard in the autumn of 1886, the *Harvard Monthly* was entering upon its second year of existence. Nobody in Cambridge regarded its editors as anything more than a company of enterprising undergraduates

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

from whom much or little might be expected in the years to come. George Santayana and Alanson B. Houghton, of the Class of 1886, were members of the first board of editors; George Pierce Baker and Bernard Berenson, of the Class of 1887, became editors-in-chief for the two volumes of their senior year. The virus of undergraduate publication was in my blood, and in that year I made small contributions to the *Monthly*, *Advocate*, and *Lampoon*. I was by no means sure of returning to Harvard for a second year when Baker, confronted with possible successors more proficient in poetry than in practical matters, astonished me with an invitation to assume editorial responsibility for the fifth volume of the *Monthly*—an anomalous task for a graduate student. Quite unconscious of any future reflected glory that might result from taking a “pinch-hitter’s” place in a transition from the *Monthly*’s brilliant beginning to its continuance under such later editors as Norman Hapgood, William Vaughn Moody, and Robert Morss Lovett, but, eager to extend the editorial experience I had enjoyed at Lehigh, I accepted the chief-editorship of the ambitious young magazine.

How to begin? For advice I turned to Barrett

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Wendell, teacher and friend. He was a sort of grandfather to the *Harvard Monthly*. The first contribution to the first issue, October, 1885, came from him, and inaugurated the custom of printing in every issue an article from an alumnus whose name and writing would carry weight with the *Monthly* audience. Who was to be my first contributor? "Try my classmate, Lawrence Lowell," said Wendell. So I did, and for the first time met Mr. Lowell, in his law office on State Street. He had graduated from the College only ten years before, in 1877, and his thirtieth birthday was not more than six months behind him. Yet he impressed me duly as a reverend alumnus, and as I left him it was with an intense satisfaction that I had received his promise to write an article for the October, 1887, *Monthly*.

In due time the manuscript came, and was printed, in No. 1, Vol. V, under the title, "The Choice of Electives." The editor and readers of that day may well have placed it in the same category with the names and productions of the "founders" who had preceded me on the magazine. The author had no standing as an expert. The elective system, developed by President Eliot in

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

the preceding decade of the seventies, was, moreover, in the full flush of general approval—in spite of President McCosh's characterization of the Eliot position as "large, loose, vague, showy, and plausible." Yet in this article, "The Choice of Electives," the young writer issued a sharp challenge to the system then in operation, and—what is far more important—foreshadowed the very changes which, on coming to the presidency of Harvard more than twenty years later, he put, by steadily advancing degrees, into effect. Nothing could have been farther from my thought in October, 1887, than that the first article in my first issue of the *Monthly* might become a document in the history of American education.

There was another experience with a distinguished contributor which I must record. Edward Everett Hale was a shining mark for editorial appeal, and I was proud to secure from him an article for the *Monthly*. I read the manuscript late one night in my study in Wadsworth House, and somewhat sleepily placed it, as I thought, at the right-hand end of my table. When I looked for it the next morning, it was not there. An empty wastebasket stood on the floor, just below the spot



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

where I expected to find the manuscript. Could it possibly have toppled into the basket? This horrid fear was confirmed when I questioned the janitor, who had come into my study early in the morning to light the open fire, never more needed to remove an inward chill. Yes, he had found some papers in the wastebasket, and used them for kindling! My heart sank within me. How could I summon courage to face the music, as I must?

Dr. Hale at this time was editing a magazine called *Lend a Hand*. These words on the door of his Boston office to which I promptly repaired seemed of good omen, but the injunction they embodied could not be applied at once, for he was not at his desk. There I was installed for the writing of a letter to state my pitiful case. I think I have never produced a more abject communication. It evoked no immediate answer, but a few days later, meeting Dr. Hale in the College Yard, I saw that my time had come, stopped him, and made a terrified, hesitant identification of myself. "So you're the fellow who burned up my manuscript, are you?" he boomed at me with his deep voice. There was, however, a kindly twinkle in his eye, and his next words were these: "Young man, you

## *Lehigh and Harvard*

have the first thing to learn about editing a magazine: Keep your manuscripts out of the fire!" What was more, he volunteered then and there to send me something else; and "Benjamin Franklin as Junius Brutus," taken from a then forthcoming volume, *Franklin in France*, appeared in the *Monthly* for May, 1888, over the signature of Edward Everett Hale. If I had still harbored any doubt about the Christian virtues of Unitarians, it would have vanished then and there.

When my second year at Harvard came to an end, there was still a summer vacation before I had to begin earning my own living. One remembrance of it may be worth recounting. Somehow in Cambridge—I forget just how—I had met with one Moses King, a writer and publisher of guidebooks in Boston. He had introduced me to a young man whose name was Thomas W. Lawson. In the Boston Directory of 1888 I find King described as the vice president and treasurer, and Lawson as the manager, of the Rand Avery Company, a printing house then on Franklin Street. Lawson asked me to write a campaign pamphlet about Benjamin Harrison and Levi P. Morton, the Republican candidates for President and Vice Presi-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

dent of the United States. I had never felt at all strongly about politics, and had taken my Republicanism as a Pennsylvanian matter of course. The fifty dollars which Lawson offered to pay me for the work seemed to make it well worth undertaking. I undertook it and, when Lawson had read my manuscript, called at his office for his verdict upon what I had done. "I like it," he said, "only it is too honest for the use I meant to make of it; but I am going to pay you seventy-five dollars instead of the fifty I promised." Nobody had heard of "frenzied finance" at that time, and I walked away not a little puzzled, but gratified by the imputation of honesty, and rejoicing in the very first earnings from my pen.

The incident passed entirely from my mind for many years. I believe it was when Lawson died, in 1925, that I found, in an account of his life, a reference to a Republican campaign pamphlet he had issued in 1888. This excited my curiosity, but it was only the other day that I took the trouble to look into the matter. Sure enough, the card-catalogue of the Boston Public Library led me to an elaborate twenty-page production of newspaper size, in red, white, and blue covers, entitled im-

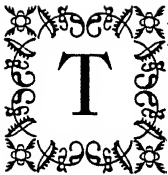
## *Lehigh and Harvard*

partially "Political History" and "Our Bandanna." Under the second title appeared the motto, "From the acorn Protection grows the oak Prosperity," and beneath that, four lines of verse signed "Uncle Sam," but borrowed from the author of "Woodman, spare that tree," with the single change of "Woodman" into "Workman." I will not enumerate the sound Republican contents of the gigantic pamphlet, with its sketches of Republican worthies, from George Washington and Alexander Hamilton to James G. Blaine. At the end of the procession, sure enough, came brief biographies of Benjamin Harrison and Levi P. Morton. They were of a quality which could not excite unduly either the pride or the shame of their writer. After more than fifty years, and with no copy of what I wrote before me, I am unable to swear that they were mine; but I strongly suspect that they were. Lawson appeared on the first page of the pamphlet merely as the "Editor," and having purchased a bit of copy from an unknown and willing hack he naturally felt himself free to use it as he chose. The idea of so grandiose a publication may well have come to him after he found my manuscript inadequate for separate use. Let us hope so.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

One further word remains to be said about "Our Bandanna." From the copy I examined, I learned that it was printed also in two more sumptuous editions. One of these, the "Booklovers' Edition," limited to 300 copies, was offered at twenty-five dollars a copy. The other was a "Presidential Edition," limited to five copies, printed on "silk satin, made expressly for this edition, and signed by the Republican candidates for President and Vice-President, and the author"—no longer the "editor." Copies No. 1 and 2 were to be presented, respectively, to Benjamin Harrison and Levi P. Morton. Whether Thomas W. Lawson called himself editor or author, what does it matter? If only the sketches of Harrison and Morton were really mine, as there is such good reason to believe they were! What other beginner in letters has had his first commissioned piece of work printed on "silk satin" in a "Presidential Edition" of five copies? If this be a fact, it became known to me only after fifty-one years.

*Born or Made?*

HERE IS a prevalent impression that the Bostonian and the poet have at least one thing in common—that each is born, not made. Now by every outward token I have become a Bostonian. When I try to tell myself that no such creature could have grown out of the far from Boston beginnings I have just recorded, I am forced to remember that more than once in recent years I have been summoned on the same Monday to meetings of the Harvard Board of Overseers, the Trustees of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a committee of the Boston Athenæum, and the Vestry of Trinity Church. Ten years earlier there might have been also a meeting of the directors of the Atlantic Monthly Company on one of those days. Fortunately there was always a conflict which prevented my coping with all of these obligations. Otherwise I might not have lived to tell the tale, which is told in no spirit of vainglory, but merely to explain the mistaken notion that I must be a Bostonian

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

born. (Even on the point of having been made—completely—I cling to certain private reservations.) In whatever degree the condition may exist, it has come to pass through no deliberate intention of my own. The poet is a good deal less easily made than the Bostonian.

When my boyhood came to an end, I suppose my clearest ambition as a writer was to produce at least a lyric or two which might meet with general acceptance as poetry. The writing of verse was a pursuit in which, early and late, I have taken great pleasure, and it did seem at first just possible that even an unwilling Minerva might help me with my secret ambition. I cannot flatter myself that this has happened, in spite of a succession of small volumes of verse in the reading of which I have not been able to observe that anybody has found so much enjoyment as I took in writing them. No matter: at the beginning of one of these volumes, published thirty years ago, I printed four stanzas, "The Song to the Singer," of which the last two were the following:—

Above this faltering tune that tells  
The measure I must walk within,  
For us a sweeter music wells—  
The magic strain that might have been.

## *Born or Made?*

Yet this is better than to die,  
And you had joy of me one day;  
Then you are mine, and yours am I—  
Who likes us not may go his way.

So I felt then, and so I feel still—that the processes of creation justify themselves, if only for the creator. When others go their way, he has no ground for complaint. The voice of the bathroom singer is not expected to carry far. So much for a minor bard who would have liked to be born a poet, and seems instead to have been made a Bostonian. It may be as difficult as passing through the eye of a needle to become both a poet and a Bostonian. As between the two distinctions, who would not prefer the first?

Thomas Bailey Aldrich used to say that he was only "Boston-plated," not the genuine article. This may be true of all the transmuted outlanders, but many of them—the historian James Ford Rhodes, formerly of Cleveland, must be named as an exception—have unwittingly acquired an extraordinary capacity to deceive the casual observer. Rhodes was enthusiastically adopted by Boston, and welcomed to the inmost circles. Yet I suspect that he never suffered accusations such as some that I have had to face. When *The Late George Apley*



## *A Venture in Remembrance*


appeared, it was commonly said, even in print, that I was the prototype of Apley's biographer, Horatio Willing. The author of the book, not unnaturally, denied it; but suspicions are notoriously hard to kill, and when *Time*, in the spring of 1939, printed a generous review of my *Holmes of the Breakfast-Table*, this was embellished by a portrait with my name beneath it, and, beneath that, not the name of Horatio Willing, but the legend, "*The late George Apley?*" I was thankful at least for the question-mark, but could not help wondering whether I had really become such a Bostonian as the words under the portrait were obviously intended to suggest. I could not believe it, though unable to blink the fact that almost at the same time a New Haven newspaper reviewer was defining me as "a Bostonian of the ultimate Brahman caste." Surely this was "none of I." Nevertheless, how does one approach the point at which any such thing can be thought or said?

Of course it can happen only by slow degrees. Looking back over fifty years, I can now see that the passage through those degrees was coincident with circumstances having something more than a personal significance, and possibly therefore

### *Born or Made?*

worthy of record. It was starting in an afterglow from genuine lights to begin an acquaintance with Boston while Holmes and Whittier and Lowell were yet living, and Emerson and Longfellow had but recently quitted the scene, while the great names of the Civil War—Robert Gould Shaw, Governor Andrew, and others—were much more than names, while Garrison and Wendell Phillips still lived more clearly in memory than in bronze. The embers of a great tradition had by no means lost their warmth and light.

“*Star-bright Companion of my  
Youth*”


 INTO THE afterglow from the “Augustan Age” of New England I came, as it were, through a back door, even as I had made my entrance to Harvard after four undergraduate years at Lehigh. In the little Boston world of letters late in the eighties there was hardly a humbler post than that of an assistant in the editorial department of the *Youth's Companion*—a post into which I stepped on quitting Harvard. This journal, as it happened, was far more a national than a local institution. When Grant appointed as Secretary of the Treasury a Massachusetts lawyer, William Adams Richardson, not so well known as he might have been in Boston, a Bostonian who did know him is said to have explained him to a local inquirer who did not as having “merely a national reputation.” In some measure this was true of the *Youth's Companion*, though there were many intelligent Bostonians who were hardly conscious that it had

“*Star-bright Companion of my Youth*”

any reputation, either at home or afield. Reared myself on *Our Young Folks* and *St. Nicholas*, I am afraid I shared their ignorance, and had never read a copy of the paper before I entered its employ. Now I like to think of it under the designation bestowed by one of its frequent contributors, Louise Imogen Guiney—“the strong, star-bright Companion of my Youth.”

At first I had five years of it, and later fourteen—in all nearly two decades of the Yankee Victorianism which, before the second term was over, might better have been called a Victorian hang-over. The time was still so much a time of reticence that the whole conduct of the paper was anonymous and impersonal in the extreme. When a member of the staff died or retired, nothing was said about it in print—the *Companion* was itself held to be an unchanging, undying personality, irrespective of individuals. Yet for thirty-one years before I first knew it, in 1888, it was dominated by a personality of extraordinary power, exercised in that cloistral privacy which shuns every expression of publicity for itself. This was Daniel Sharp Ford, who began his life in relative poverty, made his way as a printer, and when he was thirty-five, in

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

1857, purchased, with a partner, a Sunday-School weekly, the *Youth's Companion*, established thirty years before by Deacon Nathaniel Willis, whose son, Nathaniel P. Willis, was soon to write letters from London which could never have found a place in his father's periodical. To keep the correspondence of the *Youth's Companion* separate from that of the *Watchman and Reflector*, a Baptist journal of which for a time Ford was a part owner, he invented the name of "Perry Mason & Company" as publishers of the little weekly which soon became his individual property. Persons who wished to go straight to headquarters used to begin their letters "Dear Mr. Mason," but the veil was never drawn aside, and it is believed that the name of Daniel S. Ford never appeared in his own paper until his death in 1899, when his successors felt that the time had really come to give credit where it was due.

Well they might! The circulation of the paper had risen from 4000 when Ford first took it in hand to more than a half-million at the time of his death. This was a phenomenal figure when the century was about to begin, unique in those days before advertisers could be tempted with circula-

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

tions of two or three millions. The newsstand sales of the paper were negligible—it went direct to subscribers, enticed from all portions of the country especially by two devices. The first of these was the annual "Premium Number," an autumn issue which set the youth of the land agog. It was in effect an elaborate mail-order catalogue, fully illustrated, and worded in terms which young and old—for Youth had a broad interpretation in the Companion vocabulary—found hard to resist. It offered toy steam-engines, skates, books, sewing-machines, real and toy, caps and gloves—even, for at least one year, live goats, involving strange problems of office care through the weeks before the flood of orders exhausted the supply; it offered everything the heart of young America could desire, and all of these objects could be obtained by the securing of new subscriptions, in small and large numbers, for the *Youth's Companion*. Men who were once boys in country towns, East and West, have told me of the excitement that attended the delivery of the mail on one October Thursday in their communities. Boys and girls, snatching their papers from the postmistress, began rushing from house to house in search of

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

fellow townsmen, of any age, who had not already been drawn into the *Companion* fold. The more energetic youth accomplished wonders, not only for the subscription-lists in Boston but for the increase of their private possessions of every sort. When the paper moved from its office on the upper stories of 41, Temple Place to a stately building of its own on Columbus Avenue, and editors were wafted by elevators to the top floor instead of climbing their steep ascent of heaven by stair, they passed enough floor space devoted to "premiums" to furnish forth a warehouse of miscellaneous articles foreshadowing the Sears-Roebuck buildings of the present. An irreverent boy was once heard to murmur as he crossed the threshold, "Gee, this is a fine building for such a bum paper." It was not in such terms, however, that the boys of the country at large, and their parents, regarded it.

The second device for attracting subscribers was a later autumn issue—the annual "Announcement Number." The lure of popular and impressive names was then believed, and rightly, to possess an enormous drawing power. Among the popular names were always some that were beloved household words in the huge circle of *Companion* readers,

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

and yet were virtually unknown in the contemporary world of letters. They were writers of fiction, short stories and serials, constructed almost invariably according to a formula, dealing largely in taboos, which left them with the narrowest of markets if they were found unacceptable for the *Companion*. The topic of love, for example, was excluded, and it was only towards the end of my acquaintance with the paper that this taboo was modified to the mild extent of admitting the topic on the strict provision that the love depicted in a story should end in marriage. I cannot remember that there was any lifting of the ban against tobacco and alcoholic beverages. In what good could they possibly end? The wonder was, and still it grows in my remembrance, that it was possible to secure so many stories of interest and merit, even outside the field of adventure, in which, as in poetry, the *Companion* positively excelled. It should be added that when once a writer mastered the *Companion* formula, he was in luck. Manuscripts that might conceivably be used at some future time, possibly years ahead, were bought in appalling numbers, and filed away in great cabinets, under the classifications—Boys',



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Girls', Family, Adventure, Humorous—to which they might be assigned some day in the standardized make-up of the paper. The rates of payment were not high, but there was no limit to the number of manuscripts that might be bought from a single writer in a single year.

Many favorite writers for the paper's special audience might be named. It is impossible to pass over one of them. This was C. A. Stephens—no better known by his full name, Charles Asbury Stephens—a story-writer with a personal following in his day which, for sheer numbers, James or even Howells, I suspect, might have envied. He was a son of Maine and a graduate of Bowdoin. Early in life he set himself to writing for the young, and was only twenty-six years old when Ford, in 1870, put him on a salary as a regular contributor to the *Youth's Companion*. For more than sixty years he continued, far beyond Ford's death, in this strange position of a salaried writer of fiction. He is said to have estimated that he wrote more than three thousand short stories and sketches for the *Companion* and more than a hundred serial stories. Ford sent him forth on many journeys from Panama to Alaska in the Western Hemisphere,

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

and in Europe, to collect materials for his writing. It was, however, on the "Old Home Farm" in Maine, and with the "Old Squire" of his native state, that he was most at home. He thought the thoughts and spoke the language of a vast body of Americans throughout the country, and was, I believe, unique among writers in the possession of unquestionable power and homely skill which endeared him to a multitude of readers without his own achieving any recognized place in what is known as "American literature." It was another anomaly that nearly twenty years after graduating from college he took the degree of M.D. at Boston University, and proceeded to write a series of scientific books, "asserting," as his friend and *Companion* colleague, Joseph E. Chamberlin, wrote in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "the possibility of the eventual human control of the conditions of life. He rejected all but material conditions, finding in the individual no soul apart from the tissues of living organisms." What his patron, Daniel S. Ford, a pillar of orthodoxy, made of all this, I know not. But what is he making, from beyond the grave, of the uses to which the Baptist Social Union of Boston has put his bequest of nearly a million

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

dollars? His will expressed the wish that the gift might stimulate the interest of members of the Union "in the welfare of those who are dependent upon the returns from their daily toil for their livelihood." This wish has been liberally interpreted; and it is at least within the bounds of possibility that Ford himself, a man of vision for all the limits in which he appeared to enclose himself, would have seen, in the radical tendencies that mark the discussions in Ford Hall,—built by the Baptist Social Union, and now the chief sounding-board of advanced political and social ideas in Boston,—some approach to the fulfillment of his generous thought. But possibly not.

To return to the "Announcement Number": the names with which it bourgeoned forth every year were not merely those of C. A. Stephens and fellow specialists in *Companion* fiction, but also the most conspicuous in the world at large: Tennyson, Gladstone, the Marquis of Lorne, Sir Garnet Wolseley, Canon Farrar, and Henry M. Stanley were a few out of the many from overseas whose contributions were mated by articles from such Americans as Mark Twain, Theodore Roosevelt, Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland, Whittier,

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

Phillips Brooks, Sara Orne Jewett—the list might be extended indefinitely. To refresh my memory of these contributors I have recently looked at some old bound volumes of the *Companion* in the nineties. A single group of writers promised for one year consisted of Barrie, Stevenson, Howells, Kipling, and Mark Twain. Again, an announcement promise was fulfilled by the printing, on February 13, 1896, of an article on "The Bar as a Profession," by the Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Coleridge. The next issue contained a second article, under the same title, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. This was followed, in the same issue, by "A Rejoinder" from Lord Coleridge and "A Postscript" by Judge Holmes. These papers were typical of the really important and valuable matter to be unearthed by even a casual scrutiny of the files.

For many years the work of securing the most eminent contributors was in the hands of William H. Rideing, a journalist of English birth, and of a familiarity with the upper Bohemia of New York and London which would have been as alien to his employer as the Ford Hall Forum. Rideing's

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

quarry was the big game with big names, and the spoils of his yearly hunt were amazing. For some years he performed a similar task for the *North American Review*, for which he prided himself on having arranged a discussion of faith with Gladstone, Cardinal Manning, and Robert G. Ingersoll as the participants. He may have been suggesting something of the same sort to Dr. Holmes when the Autocrat told him, as he told others, that S. S. McClure had made a similar proposal, only to be told that Holmes "would neither be allured nor McClured" into anything of the kind. Towards the end of Rideing's life he published a lively book of reminiscences, *Many Celebrities and a Few Others*, which has not even yet, I suspect, met with its deserts as a source of authentic and amusing illumination of the great and near-great of the author's day. It was, by the way, in 1884, three years after Rideing joined the *Companion*, that Tennyson's poem, "Early Spring," was printed in the paper. The Poet Laureate was said, truly I believe, to have received \$1000 for his lyric of eight stanzas. This was too much for the American parodist, under whose touch the last two lines,

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

The blackbirds have their wills,  
The poets too,

were converted into

The blackbirds have their bills,  
The poets too.

Still another personality in the *Companion* days of the eighties and nineties, contrasting perhaps even more strongly than the Down-East C. A. Stephens with the sophisticated Rideing, was Hezekiah Butterworth, the very embodiment of the sentimentality which doubtless contributed a potent element to the building up of the paper. He was a native of Warren, Rhode Island, a town adjoining my own native Bristol. Verse, prose, and kindliness flowed from him in equally abundant streams, though it can hardly be said that his writing was as good as his heart. Never married, he led a hospitable existence in a South End boarding-house. In the course of his correspondence he invited a Tennessee contributor, one Will Allen Dromgoole, to share his rooms on an impending visit to Boston. To his easily imaginable horror, the contributor appeared one day at his office door, as

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

*Miss* and not as the *Mr.* Dromgoole the blameless Hezekiah had been expecting. The situation was handled with as much propriety as if *Companion* fiction, and not fact, had been involved, but the incident brightened the lives of Butterworth's colleagues. They found a certain amusement also in a newspaper item to the effect that "Hezekiah Butterworth" was said to be the *nom de plume* of Horace E. Scudder of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Now Butterworth was writing a series of "Zigzag Journey" books for the young while Scudder was producing his eight "Bodley Books" of juvenile travel—a series of more substantial merit. It was natural to wonder whether Scudder or Butterworth was the more annoyed at their being rolled into one.

Besides the three *Companion* editors I have mentioned, the staff, as I knew it first and last, contained a number of men of far more than common ability and distinction. Their work for the paper served to make it something besides that pillar of respectability and morality which it certainly was. It was also a vehicle of the soundest information, for never was material destined to print subjected to more meticulous scrutiny and revision. One

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

learned gentleman, called the "Revising Editor," read all the final proof and verified, through a large reference library, every statement of fact. It was a really educated staff, qualified, in the person of one member or another, to pass upon all manner of subjects, in history, politics, letters, and the arts. Thus the paper, with its obvious limitations, became a vital agency of civilization, solid rather than imaginative, but of positive constructive influence upon millions of lives in the forming.

Let me name a few of the editors associated, for longer and shorter periods, with the paper while I knew it at first hand: Thomas H. Clay, of Kentucky, a grandson of Henry Clay; Edward Stanwood, historian of the Presidency and biographer of James G. Blaine; Stanwood's successor in the chief-editorship, Charles Miner Thompson; Elbery Sedgwick, later of the *Atlantic Monthly*; Paul Revere Reynolds, the dean of literary agents in New York; Arthur Stanwood Pier, master of boyhood in books and school; Charles M. Flannery, not yet the interpreter of Mexico; John Macy, while married to Helen Keller's teacher; Joseph H. Sears, later president of the D. Appleton Company; Roswell M. Field, brother of Eu-



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

gene Field; Edward W. Thomson, Canadian poet and story-writer; and in the "Art Department," closely affiliated with the editorial staff, Gluyas Williams, at the beginning of his career. There were, besides, such "contributing editors" as Bradford Torrey, the naturalist, and Gamaliel Bradford. It was a goodly company, out of which I have taken only some of the names that carried farthest beyond the office walls. I need not name, but cannot forget, one genial comrade, not too energetic a journalist, who was stirred to special activity when his resources were running lowest. He could always replenish them by writing brief articles for which he was paid over and above his salary: these he proposed to collect in a book, to be entitled "Little Journeys to the Till."

It was not the policy of the paper to pay large salaries to its editors—or to demand of them much exacting work. How could anything but moderate salaries be paid to a staff numbering more than twenty, and how could so many editors, with a band of competent "art editors" to supplement them, find enough, in the preparation of a weekly journal of slender bulk, to keep them busy? There was thus an air of what Bliss Carman called a

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

"wide unhaste" about the office, and the opportunity to accomplish a good deal of work on one's own account reconciled some of us to the modest rewards for our regular duties. I doubt if there were many editorial posts in which I could have produced, between 1903 and 1913, during my second term with the paper, five such substantial volumes as *Boston, the Place and the People* and, in two volumes each, the *Life and Letters of George Bancroft* and—collaborating with Miss Sara Norton—the *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, to say nothing of the *Life and Labors of Bishop Hare* and two smaller books. Such things could be done without leaving undone one's regular duties as an editor; it was no wonder that we thought ourselves fortunately placed.

My own part in those regular duties was conducted, in large measure, behind a veil. It was in keeping with the office tradition of anonymity that editorial correspondence should be impersonal. As I have already intimated, the paper was supposed to speak, quite sufficiently, for itself, and it did. How else could it have happened that a Missouri bride-to-be sent an invitation to her wedding not to any known editor or editors but to the *Com-*

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

*panion* itself because she had read it from childhood and considered it a "near and dear friend"?

Letters, as a rule, were signed merely "The Editors." As "Corresponding Editor" myself, I remained through many years hidden behind those words from many contributors, with whom, nevertheless, it was possible to establish personal relations of a certain confidence. Early in the century, I remember, there was a succession of short poems, in a small, clear, black handwriting from an unknown poet in New Hampshire, whose writings seemed to me to strike a fresh and enchanting note. He has told me in recent years—and I take no shame in cherishing what he said—that my anonymous letters from the *Companion* were among the very first to give him any encouragement to proceed as a poet. At Christmas of 1931 that poet, whom I came to know when the *Companion* was far behind us both, gave me a copy of his "Collected Poems," with these words written on the fly-leaf:

To Mark A. DeW. Howe

who many a year ago (a score and a half or so)  
wrote three words into one of the poems in it, but

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

who won't remember which they were (and I won't tell him, because I don't believe in giving the critics any more help than I have to give them).

ROBERT FROST

If only Mr. Frost will not repudiate publicly the buried words as a blemish on one of his lyrics—I assume in "A Boy's Will"—there will be no ground for complaint.

Of course the contributors with whom the Corresponding Editor corresponded would sometimes turn up in person. Then of course the anonymity was dropped, and perhaps the visitor went out to lunch with me. One such contributor was Jack London. I found no reference to the *Youth's Companion* in the index to his recent biography: it may have been thought that nobody would believe he had written many stories for so bourgeois a publication, but he did, and it was to discuss these contributions that we went together one day to the Tavern Club. In my privately printed *Semi-Centennial History* (1934) of that club I have related an incident of my lunch with London which may be repeated. Before he parted from me, I led him to the large leather-bound Visitors' Book, and asked him to write his name in it. He

### *A Venture in Remembrance*

turned the pages and, when he found one entirely blank, wrote upon it, in enormous letters, the inscription virtually filling the page:—

*YOURS FOR THE REVOLUTION*

*JACK LONDON*

So it stood in solitary grandeur until a later day when another visitor to the Club was asked to leave his autograph behind him. Instead of taking a page for his name alone, he stopped at Jack London's, and beneath its flamboyance wrote, in the smallest and neatest of English-man-of-letters script:—

*There won't be no Revolution*

*H. G. Wells*

Wells, I believe, was one of the English contributors to the *Companion*, as Arnold Bennett was another, enticed by Rideing into the pages of the paper.

Besides the men of letters, there were the babes of letters—the would-be contributors, young and old, from every corner of the country. I used to feel that the most illuminating substitute for extensive travel in America was to sit still in the

*“Star-bright Companion of my Youth”*

*Companion* office and read the manuscripts which poured in a never-ceasing stream over one's desk. They pictured the life of the country in almost every conceivable phase—domestic, adventurous, on 'land and sea, in cities, towns, and farms, factories and fields, all with a naïveté that produced the effect of utter faithfulness. One came to recognize, it seemed unfailingly, the authenticity of “local color,” though wholly ignorant of a given locality. It was the day of dialect stories, and one became no less adept in appraising their accuracy. Babes indeed, in mind if not in years, were many of the aspirants to print. I tucked away from time to time especially precious manuscripts with which no return postage was enclosed. Of course many of them, though by no means all, came from mere boys and girls. There was one of these who suspected that a certain story failed of success because “the decimal points were not placed,” and proposed to send another on which he would not “spair time nor money to have it in first class order,” and would “hire an experienced hand to place the decimal points.” A woman in Pennsylvania, old enough to be married, disgusted that a voluminous manuscript of hers must be returned,

### *A Venture in Remembrance*

broke forth, "I will say this (though the clouds rain down bunker hill monuments and baked beans for the next month to come) that my story is better than some which I read in your much puffed paper," and added a little later: "please be so kind as to close my manuscript in such a way that even the sharp eyes of our old maid post mistress will not see what it is. With poor old Job I can truly say that I don't want to recollect the day on which I was born. Job expressed the wish that his adversary would 'write a book.' Surely mine enemy did the same for me. When once again I clasp that manuscript I shall consign it to the flames and try to forget what a fool I was."

Poor lady of fifty years ago! What became of her defiance and her humility? And what of the more confident spirit who wrote, "I have just had my head examined by a graduate in Phrenology, and was pronounced naturally the best there is as a writer"? How has another contributor fared—a Missourian, troubled with no such doubts about the value of his offering? I omit from his letter nothing but the name of his own town and his own name, which may since have attained distinction in some other field than poetry:—

*"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

Feb. 24, 1890

Dear Sirs,

I send these lines hoping they may find a place in your paper.

There's a hope that we have  
And cherish through strife  
We hope our names are written  
In the lambs book of life

These lines (although my own) have been a source of comfort to me, and I trust they will be the same to all who see them.

This has truly been a source of comfort to me; in fact the writer's confession of faith has become a domestic byword for humorous self-encouragement. Nor have I failed to cherish the hero dragged from peril to peril until the author declared, "his breath came in short pants"; nor the heroine with "masses of raving black hair"; nor that glimpse of the gay world in which "Gustave Van Hoeven was a brilliant society man and had been the idol of the *decolleté* of two continents."

These are but random selections from a little paper, "Saved from the Wastebasket," which I wrote years and years ago and never printed. They recall a vanished time—and a vanished journal,



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

for alas! the excellent old *Youth's Companion* fell finally on evil days, and, like other things that seemed as stable as the pyramids, disappeared—so to define a passing into the relative limbo of survival as "*The Youth's Companion* [in small letters] combined with *The American Boy*" [in large].

Ford left the conduct of the paper to his younger associates in business, who made the grievous error of regarding his formula for a successful family journal as the formula of ultimate wisdom. Thus it fed no more than Meredith's lovers upon the advancing hours, and the world of our twentieth century slipped away from under it. Yet it lived for more than a hundred years, and for more than fifty of them was a real power in the land—a Boston institution with merely a national reputation.

One remembrance of the *Companion* relates itself clearly to a national matter still current, and its origin may be of interest. This is the matter, recently carried even to the United States Supreme Court, of the school salute to the American flag. It all began as long ago as 1892, when President Harrison, in anticipation of the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, issued a proclamation

## *"Star-bright Companion of my Youth"*

recommending that October 21, 1892, be celebrated everywhere in America by suitable exercises in the schools. Since a uniform programme was considered desirable, the Superintendents of Education throughout the country accepted a plan devised by the *Companion* for a nation-wide observance, and instructed their Executive Committee to prepare an Official Programme for a uniform observance. In order that the schools of every community might have ample time to prepare for this celebration, the *Youth's Companion*, in its issue of September 8, 1892, published the Committee's *Programme*. This consisted of eight parts, of which "Salute to the Flag" was the third. The accurately prescribed manner and words of the Salute were the *Companion's* special contribution to the *Programme*.

As time went on there was one change in the wording of the pledge of allegiance: "to my Flag" has now become "to the Flag of the United States of America." Nobody could object to that; no special pride of authorship was involved. Not so with the pledge as a whole. In recent years there has been a lively dispute between the living representatives of James B. Upham, a junior member of


## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Perry Mason & Company in 1892, and of Francis Bellamy, an editorial associate of the paper at that time, with regard to the actual writing of the pledge. The partisans of these gentlemen might have been asserting that their respective heroes had written the Letters of Junius. I believe the question of credit on the inscription of a tombstone precipitated the dispute, which became a matter of wide discussion in the press. According to a recent issue of the *World Almanac*, Francis Bellamy now wears the posthumous laurels. My own memory of the matter is that the whole project was a "pet baby" of Upham's, and that I supposed him responsible for the words embodying his idea. In the land of ghosts it may be that a ghost writer is receiving his due.

In the early nineties there was no reckoning with such a body as Jehovah's Witnesses. Who could have foreseen that the refusal of young members of that sect to join in school salutes would bring the disputed text out of the shadows into the light of this very day? How could Upham and Bellamy, those innocents of 1892, have dreamed that their expression of an uncomplicated patriotism would ever lead to controversy?

## 6

*Initiate of Boston*

Y FIRST term of five years in the service of the *Youth's Companion* had little to do with making a Bostonian of me. If that was going on at the time, it was through outside associations. I have always been thankful, for example, that a young fellow-Pennsylvanian, the Reverend W. Dewees Roberts, was an assistant minister of Trinity Church during the final years of the rectorship of Phillips Brooks, and that this friend found a place for me in the volunteer mufti chorus of men and women which supplemented the four soloists of the choir in a balcony over the west door of the church. This meant not only the rehearsing and singing of good choral music, but an unlimited opportunity to hear Phillips Brooks at the very height of his powers. After Harvard this was a piece of university extension—or adult education—which could be counted only as good fortune.

This, like other initiations into Boston to be touched upon later, had nothing to do with the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

business of breadwinning, which had become a paramount obligation on my quitting Harvard. It was to Horace E. Scudder, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, prompted by Professor Child, that I owed my introduction to the *Youth's Companion*. He must have looked upon my five years of apprenticeship there as a sufficient preparation for service in his own office. Almost at the moment of his asking me to join him, a similar invitation came from the Harpers' office in New York. Richard Harding Davis, then associated with the Harper publications, was the bearer of it. My conversion into a Bostonian must have been well under way by that time. Certainly there was one personal consideration which urged me strongly to remain in Boston. Had I yielded to the siren voice of New York, perhaps not so persuasive to the young of fifty years ago as it has since become, I wonder what would have befallen me. Who can guess what would come home to any man's business and bosom if at any parting of the ways he had chosen the path he did not take? I have had every reason to be thankful for staying where circumstances had placed me.

Before my entrance into the office of Houghton,

## *Initiate of Boston*

Mifflin and Company, it was necessary to have a clinching interview with Henry O. Houghton, the head of the firm. He seemed to me venerable and formidable beyond words. It happened that he had just returned from lunch in the state of somnolence to which men of seventy are subject at such a moment. This was a bad time for one whose speech was never too fluent and under embarrassing conditions might suffer intervals of complete suspension. In one of these intervals, when my future employer was waiting for my next word, I was horrified to observe that he had fallen asleep. Here was a predicament indeed. Should the first motion of an Industrious Apprentice take the form of waking up a nodding Master? Should one cough, or drop a book, or utter any cry for help? Luckily I held my peace, could soon say to myself, "Listen, the mighty Being is awake," and depart in assurance of a salary I was glad to accept.

Between quitting the *Youth's Companion* and joining the *Atlantic Monthly*, I made my first of a number of brief visits to England, and for the first time saw Paris for a few days. Was it merely that all young Americans of bookish tastes had been brought up on English books, or that a strong

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

element of Anglicanism had colored my background? Whatever the cause, the very smell and look of London, the flavor of Oxford and Cambridge, as of all the provincial towns, gave me then, and have always given me, a sense of having come back to something that belonged to me. Nearly fifty years have passed since that first visit, and the internationally-minded have been called upon for many adjustments of sympathy. An underlying fact remains unshaken—that no other European power stands so clearly as Britain for the maintenance of the same forms and standards of civilization as our own. Discount as you will the inheritance of a common language and a common body of tradition, then imagine the possible rearrangements of the broken pattern of a disrupted world. Even as these words are written Europe is tearing itself to pieces. These presumably will some day be reassembled. If the civilization most closely related to our own is to perish, or to yield its place to another, opposed in principle to every ideal of democracy, I shall feel little envy for the American generations that will follow mine.

My new chief, Horace E. Scudder, was one of the best, and busiest, of men, the soul of kindness

## *Initiate of Boston*

to his helpers and contributors, including especially the aspiring young, and a very model of ceaseless industry. I had not been long in the room at 4, Park Street adjoining his own when he entered it one day heavily laden with unbound books bulging from his arms. These he disposed on the top of my desk—one of those “roll-top” affairs now on the way to becoming curiosities—and said, “Here are eleven volumes of a new edition of Thoreau. I always like to keep a little knitting-work on hand—and here is some for you. In your odd moments please make a general index for these volumes.” A more congenial chore was the production every month of a considerable portion of the department, “Comment on New Books,” consisting of miniature reviews. There was, of course, the constant reading of manuscripts, solicited or volunteered. There were no such moments of gaiety as the more naïve offerings to the *Companion* had provided; but Sarah Orne Jewett, Charles Egbert Craddock, Margaret Deland, Gilbert Parker, William Wetmore Story, St. Loe Strachey, and a host of others soon joined my growing company of manuscript acquaintances, and some of them, especially Miss Jewett, became



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

much more. I cannot forget the surprise with which I looked first upon the receptacle used by Mr. Scudder for manuscripts awaiting publication. It was nothing more or less than a tin bread-box, a striking emblem of contrast between the long-range provision of the *Youth's Companion*, with its vast cabinets, and the methods of a magazine aiming at the immediate interest of thoughtful readers. In place, moreover, of the staff of more than twenty editors, there were, concerned primarily with the magazine, only Mr. Scudder, the amazingly erudite and conservative Miss Susan M. Francis, firm in the traditions of previous editors, and myself. It would have taken an uncommonly stupid youngster to learn nothing from this situation.

One minor incident gave clear enough proof that the youngster in me survived the proper bounds of time. At the entrance to the office at Number 4 (reduced much later to 2) Park Street, there was a black book, with vertical rulings in which every employee of the firm was expected to enter the hours of his arrival in the morning, his exit and entrance at lunchtime, his departure in the afternoon—merely an anticipation of the factory

## *Initiate of Boston*

time clock. The demon of impudence prompted me one day to turn the blank page at the beginning of this book into a title-page, on which I made bold to write, "The Short but Simple Annals of the Poor." Somehow I suffered no penalty for this performance, but, if my memory is not at fault, the book of hours passed before long out of use.

Through these bachelor years in Boston my initiation into its simple mysteries must have been proceeding, all unrealized at the time. Some friends I had made at Harvard introduced me to their families. At Longwood, the portion of Brookline hardly distinguishable from Boston, my brother Reginald had begun his long rectorship of the Church of Our Saviour, and frequent visits to his Rectory added further to my circle of acquaintance. One Longwood association I recall with special pleasure. That was the "Mass Club" which met every other winter Sunday evening in the house of Francis W. Lawrence, containing a capital organ. Here a small chorus, directed by J. C. D. Parker, sound musician and organist of Trinity Church, sang Masses and Cantatas from Beethoven to Gounod and Parker himself—the spell of Bach was yet in abeyance—with three

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

soloists from the Trinity choir to shine forth in the solo parts. This Mass Club, not the only local society of its special kind, existed solely for the pleasure of its members, and was innocent of any ambition to sing for audiences. Here was another implement of adult education.

There was, besides, a shorter-lived Club of this period of which I must not forget to make a brief, and perhaps the only, record. My Harvard classmate George P. Baker, beginning his teaching career in the English Department at Harvard, brought it into being, as the earliest token, I believe, of his lifelong devotion to the drama. Its name, the Mermaid Club, suggested its purpose—to cultivate a serious interest in the stage. George Santayana, Norman Hapgood, Robert Herrick, H. T. Parker, Jefferson B. Fletcher, and George R. Carpenter were among its few members. We met at Baker's rooms in Grays Hall, and gave ear to each other's papers and talks. I was guilty myself of two little offerings—pale in comparison with a paper on Ibsen by Carpenter, whose untimely death not many years later was to cut short his brilliant career at Columbia. I believe this paper, printed in *Scribner's Magazine* for

## *Initiate of Boston*

April 1889, was the first conspicuous American recognition of the great Norwegian—even as an article of Baker's in the *Harvard Monthly* of June 1887 had appeared as the first important study of George Meredith in America. The young editors of the *Monthly*, as nearly all the Mermaiders had once been, were wide awake to the "newness" of their time.

To one of their meetings came Clyde Fitch, to read us his one-act play "Frederick Lemaître." He returned with me to my lodging in Boston, and, talking well into the morning hours, we laid the foundations of what proved, for me, a most enjoyable friendship. At the first night of his "Betty's Finish," at the Boston Museum, and on visits to his apartment in the Carnegie Building in New York, I was his guest, as, by way of strange contrast, he was mine one New Year's Eve in Boston when we went together to the midnight service conducted by Phillips Brooks in Trinity Church, and again returned to Mt. Vernon Street for long, congenial talk. All this I owed to Baker's Mermaid Club, of which I cherish one surviving memento—the printed menu of a dinner in which the members took themselves seriously enough to

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

indulge at the Revere House on May 28, 1891. Their names appear in it, and the cover is adorned by a small water-color sketch of a corner of the Harvard yard. I confess myself subject to correction in saying that its *pictor ignotus* was George Santayana, but such is my strong impression.

The Longwood Cricket Club afforded the exercise of tennis. For a while there was the Papyrus Club, which took its Bohemianism a little too seriously, and the Puritan Club, which did the same with its youthful respectability: I learned about Boston from them. Simultaneously with entering the *Atlantic* office, came the good fortune of election to the Tavern Club, which has been for nearly fifty years the focus of masculine society and friendship to which I owe more of what President Eliot liked to call "durable satisfaction" than any other social organization of its kind could have afforded.

All this masculinity had a feminine counterpart, centered in one person. In my first winter in Boston I met a girl of eighteen whose name was Fanny Huntington Quincy. With her I felt instantly a sympathy never known to me before—or since. A close friendship ensued, and this happy

## *Initiate of Boston*

bond between could not help transcending friendship. Then came our married life of more than thirty-three years, and then my wife's death. If a choice of companionship through an unending hereafter should ever be offered to me I should choose again as I did when most of this life lay before me. Here, to an extraordinary degree, she lives on in two sons and a daughter, in each of whom certain qualities of hers are definitely, though variously, manifested. That most penetrating scientist, Harlow Shapley, was asking me once about these three children, whose diverse activities appeared to interest him. When I had said my say, he turned on me quickly with "What was their mother like?" "There, my friend," I answered, "you have it."

From my wife's surname of Quincy implications of thrusting my neck into the very noose of Boston might readily be drawn. In the nineteenth century three mayors of the city, the first of whom was also president of Harvard, were of her immediate stock. There was, however, little of the conventional Bostonian in her and her nearest of kin. In Boston, even as elsewhere, one may encounter, now and then, the effects of an emancipating

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

flame of mind and spirit which does away with local definitions. For myself I am afraid my own instincts and inheritances had much to do with my taking as kindly as I did to the general influences which convert the unresisting outsider into a Bostonian.

The Boston Breakfast-Table of Dr. Holmes was, so to speak, on its last legs when my conversion began. Of its surviving equivalents I had some experience before joining the clubs to which I have referred. There were no "quick" or "one-arm" lunches in those days—and no drugstores with books and food in their pharmacies. Only the opulent could frequent hotels and the few restaurants of the better sort. There was, however, a small room, known as the "Hole-in-the-Ground," under an apartment house on Mt. Vernon Street near Charles, where William Dixon, a Negro, magnified in our eyes as the brother of a prize-fighting "Coffee-Cooler," provided what Calverley called "light and salutary meals." With my brother Wallis, beginning the study and practice of architecture which took him before many years to Providence, I lodged for several years over Clough and Shackley's drugstore then on Charles

## *Initiate of Boston*

Street just behind its present location. First to the "Hole-in-the-Ground" we resorted for sustenance, and then to a Holmesian boardinghouse on Chestnut Street. This was kept by a vivacious Mrs. Knowlton, whose daughter, Mrs. Arthur Foote, the composer's wife, called forth from my friend Copeland an early *mot* touching this lady, whom he admired, and "the beautiful Mrs. Inches," possibly known to him best through Sargent's portrait. "It takes twelve Mrs. Inches," he said, "to make a Mrs. Foote."

It was at Dixon's little restaurant that "Cope"—the appellation I have always maintained for Charles Townsend Copeland against the mounting tide of "Copey"—first crossed my path. He seemed then as far away from the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard as another irregular patron of the "Hole-in-the-Ground," a young lawyer named Louis D. Brandeis, seemed from the Supreme Court of the United States. There were other young men of interest and obvious promise, among them Brandeis's law partner, George R. Nutter. It was Copeland, however, who seemed most nearly unique. Perhaps he would have been a revelation to any-



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

one in his twenties whose friends had conformed in general with conventional patterns. Certainly he was a revelation to me, falling heir as I did to an intimacy he established first with my brother Wallis. "Babble on, sweet child," he used to say to that beginner in architecture whose witty observations were the more amusing to him for the hesitating speech which made brothers of us in more than the common sense. Copeland at this time was associated with the *Boston Post* which then divided with the still "respectable daily" the *Advertiser* ("good for a week back") the attention of intelligent readers of the morning papers. The editor, Edwin M. Bacon, was a man of learning and cultivation, and maintained a column, "The Taverner," to which Copeland was a frequent contributor. His chief task was that of a literary and dramatic critic. New books and plays held naturally a large place in his talk, and tickets for opening nights, with this exciting companion, were frequently in his gift. There was at least one young representative of feminine Boston, the girl I have already mentioned, who was so little bound by the conventions of the time and place that he could secure her company for "the play," as he liked to

## *Initiate of Boston*

call it, more often than my brother's or my own. Through this early knowledge of him, my wife—that-was-to-be discovered his gift for reading aloud, and it is only fair to credit her with having assembled, in her parents' house on Charles Street, the first audience for one of those "Copeland Readings" which were later to become classic institutions at Harvard and elsewhere. Even as I write this, in all honesty, I cannot help recalling how many persons have said to me, "You know it was in my house [in New York, or the Berkshires, or at Dark Harbor] that Ruth Draper gave her very first performance of monologues." The seven cities that claimed Homer dead set a sturdy precedent in relation to *premières*.

However it may have been with Copeland in this particular, I am certain that he read aloud to me, within the four walls of my lodging, much prose in which he found beauty, and much poetry, especially Shakespeare. From his companionship I derived also a stimulus to good reading in general, and a provision of criteria, to which I suspect I have owed more in my commerce with books and writing for some fifty years than I can ascribe to any other single teacher. When I hear some of

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

those "former pupils" of whom Copeland is so proud acknowledge their debt to him, I am tempted to interject, "But I was a private pupil before you were born."

In 1930, that unique organization, the "Charles Townsend Copeland Alumni Association," celebrated the seventieth birthday of this old friend at a dinner in the New York Harvard Club. Unable to attend it, I sent from Washington, where I was spending a winter at the Library of Congress, some verses for the occasion. They were called "A Former Pupil of Mine." There has been no change in the feeling they sought to express. Two stanzas may speak for all the original four:—

Was I a pupil of his? Would the *custos rotulorum*  
Find name of mine on the lists of the fortunate  
beings he taught?

What does it matter? Who cares about counting  
an accurate quorum

At meetings with Copeland? What counts is the  
lucky infection one caught!

Catch it we did, whether sitting like empty pails in  
his classes,  
Soon to be filled with a lavish outpouring of wisdom and wit,

## *Initiate of Boston*

Or talking alone with the master and quickening  
friend that surpasses  
The rest, as the candles of Hollis surpass the lights  
otherwise lit.

It was, however, the wholehearted friend and good companion of Copeland's journalistic days that I like best to recall. Late at night my name would sometimes ring out from the sidewalk below the window of my lodgings on Mt. Vernon Street. When I thrust out my head the voice which has been so often—and often so badly—imitated would issue its summons: "Come down to the Adams House and eat things." To my reply, "Too late, Cope, I must go to bed," I can hear now the melancholy rejoinder, "You do not love me any more!" There was good reason to wonder what the neighbors made of this tragic parting word. His desire to "eat things," especially at hours impossible for any worker at an office desk, won him my nickname of "Edax Rerum." Perhaps some of the neighbors, even in Boston, would have wondered at that also. Nor could they have guessed what capacities of friendship, what wells of feeling, moved about Beacon Hill in the person of the slowly perambulating Copeland.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

While I was coming thus to form one friendship that was to stretch far into the future, another, terminated only by the death of Robert A. Woods in 1925, was beginning. Precisely how and where my path first crossed his—though I seem to associate Dewees Roberts with bringing us together—I do not remember. He had graduated at Amherst in the class corresponding with mine at Lehigh, had studied theology at Andover, and, greatly influenced by the teachings of Dr. William J. Tucker, afterwards president of Dartmouth, had gone to London and spent a life-directing year of apprenticeship in “settlement work,” under Canon Barnett at Toynbee Hall. This, in the late eighties, was the pioneer enterprise of its kind—the forerunner of Hull House in Chicago, the Henry Street Settlement in New York, and Andover House—now for many years the South End House—in Boston. Woods was establishing Andover House when I first came to know him. He impressed me at once as the most sincere and genuine of lay priests in the religion of human relations. Both he and the path he was blazing appealed so strongly to my imagination that he had little difficulty in persuading me to pay evening

## *Initiate of Boston*

visits to "the House" as a helper in its various activities. Except for inducing one or two others to join me in this undertaking—especially MacGregor Jenkins of the *Atlantic Monthly* and my brother Wallis—I am afraid I contributed pitifully little to the conduct of the boys' clubs, the dramatics, and other bridges between the neighborhood and its invaders. One distinction I may claim as a consequence of the association with Robert Woods. This was that he gave to his first book about social settlements the title, *The City Wilderness*, acknowledged in his preface as borrowed from a review of *Hull House Maps and Papers* in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January 1896, written by me and headed "Settlers in the City Wilderness."

If I gave little to "the House" and to what Woods liked humorously to call "the work," I got much from it, chiefly through the extension of my social sympathies. This came to pass most of all through my spending approximately the first three months of 1893 as a resident of the House, quitting entirely for the time the slopes of Beacon Hill but continuing my daytime labors in the office of the *Youth's Companion*. Soon after Woods's

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

death I contributed to the *South End Sun* of February 27, 1925 a brief article about him; upon this I draw for the three paragraphs immediately following.

There were some half-dozen of us at the Andover House, graduates of Amherst, Princeton, and other colleges, who, on the face of it, appeared to have little in common. But there was Woods—not yet thirty, and probably as old as any of us—as the unifying leader of the little band. What one remembers most clearly about him is the quietly dominating religious spirit in which all his work was done. The tokens of this spirit were in no wise obtrusive, yet reminding you by this or that manifestation that it was his controlling impulse. You simply felt it without a word or deed of reminder. Within the house the “quaint companions” in residence, with their austere New England housekeeper, looked upon him not only as the mainspring of their daily effort in a common cause but also as the connecting link with all the world of neighbors about them. He was entering into their lives as into ours, and in a real sense making one thing of it all. The neighbors must have

## *Initiate of Boston*

realized it as clearly as we did, though neither they nor we were putting it into words.

The activities of the House that winter were rudimentary in comparison with those of later years. We who devoted our evenings to these enterprises must remember what the benign, humorous, friendly, understanding presence of Robert Woods contributed to every gathering he joined.

But it was in the more intimate circle of the residents, particularly in talk at the table or when the day's work was done, that the real man most truly revealed himself. The immediate problem of the moment never blinded him to the greater problems of the future. Dealing constantly with questions pressing for answers on the spot, he kept the great generalization to which every answer must relate itself constantly before him. From the first he represented that best type of idealist whose chief and permanent concern is with the deepest realities.

The social settlement with all its familiar attempts at give-and-take in the life of huddled communities is now so much a matter of course that the novelty of it fifty years ago is hard to



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

recapture. The strangeness of it then is suggested by one memory that has remained with me. While Woods and I were seeing much of each other he went with me to Bristol in the early nineties for a summer week-end under my father's roof. Then about eighty-five, my father was in many habits of mind essentially a pre-Civil War man. Of course he recognized the goodness, intelligence, and, I may say, consecration of my friend. Taking me aside, however, he asked me to explain just what Woods was doing in Boston. I made it as clear as I could, only to have my father, quite baffled, respond, "And you say he is not a minister of the gospel? I don't understand—I don't understand." I shudder to think what he would have made of the social, economic, and religious views of some of his grandchildren, to say nothing of his sons, could he have looked ahead as clearly as he could look back. Woods himself was always looking ahead. "I work by the decade," he once wrote, "not by the year."

The few months at Andover House preceded immediately my entering the *Atlantic* office. I was nearing the end of my twenties, and the future looked reasonably bright. The editor under whom

## *Initiate of Boston*

I went to work gave me before long a small publication of his own, *An English Interpreter, a Sketch of Frederic James Shields*, on the fly-leaf of which he wrote in his beautiful script, "H. E. Scudder to his Understudy." There were other encouragements. Before the end of 1893 I produced a small pamphlet, privately printed, which for me possesses two distinctions. To bibliophiles the greater of these will appear the fact that it stands Number 2 on the long list of imprints of D. B. Updike, which were soon to give the Merrymont Press its world-wide fame. (Time seemed to have swung full circle when, forty-six years after this first venture, the latest of my many books, *Holmes of the Breakfast-Table*, stands high, numerically, in the hundreds of books on the Merrymont Press list.) The second distinction, in my own eyes, was the title, "Rari Nantes." The Virgilian term might never have occurred to me but for my father's frequent quoting of "*Rari nantes in gurgite vasto*" as he ladled oysters out of a large soup-tureen. Whatever its source, I have always thought this first title of mine—for a miniscular book of minor verses—a happy choice; and I held to this belief even when the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

lady to whom "Rari Nantes" was covertly dedicated liked in later years to designate it by her own ironic translation "Rare Nuggets." The most cheering thing about it at the time was that the kind Mr. Scudder, my chief in Park Street, to whom I gave a copy of the pamphlet, countered with a photograph of himself, on the back of which he had written:

"Inscribed to the Author of *Rari Nantes*

If your verses floating round  
Seek some solid resting ground,  
Here's a friend for them to tie to,  
A sort of boulder found in situ."

Here indeed I could feel that I had a friend at court.

It was a time, as I have said before, when the last of the older and more impressive figures in New England letters were disappearing. The younger writers who would have enjoyed stepping into their shoes were, with a few exceptions, like Robert Grant and Barrett Wendell, a less authentic coinage of the Boston mint than their predecessors. The transient Howells and Aldrich had New York before and behind them. The Boston pub-

## *Initiate of Boston*

lishing houses were not maintaining that identification of interest between publisher and writer which had made the firm of Ticknor and Fields so vital a factor in the sustenance of letters, and the local authors were entrusting their fortunes more and more to New York publishers. The tradition of the older writers was nevertheless strong, and those whose tastes and standards were formed, like mine, under its influence, could not but carry into the day that was dawning much from the day then waning. It was a little like receiving an education on both sides of the Atlantic, with its consequent tendency, for good or ill, to split the national infinite. There are accidents of time as well as of place in such matters.

One of the happy accidents of this period resulted from Copeland's addiction to making his younger friends known to his older. It was he who led me first to the hospitable door of Mrs. James T. Fields, the widow of the publisher whose generous ways promoted the cohesion that made the "New England group" of writers so definite a unit. Fields himself had died about ten years before I first entered the house on Charles Street in which Mrs. Fields was continuing, in what

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Henry James called her "waterside museum," the hospitalities for which it had long been famous. Copeland used to call her "Clytie"—not to her autumnal face which kept much of its springtime beauty—and indeed there was in her personality and its setting something of the Grecian quality which gave one to understand why Boston used to be called an American Athens.

Here I must indulge in a digression leaping forty years ahead of the Boston decade I am trying to recall. It happened in 1932, when I was enjoying a brief term as "visiting scholar" at the Huntington Library—strangely enough, for some work in connection with the papers of Mrs. Fields which had migrated from Charles Street to California—that Dr. Albert Einstein was quitting the Athenæum Club at Pasadena in which we were both housed. A Californian-plus reporter for the *Pasadena Post* interviewed him just before his departure, and in the issue for March 1, 1932, these very words appeared: "One question suggested that Pasadena's culture is to the modern world what Athens' culture was to the ancient. Einstein refused to make the comparison, as 'it would be too disturbing for the rest of the world.'" There spoke

## *Initiate of Boston*

not only a great scientist but a philosopher and diplomatist. The fact is that both Massachusetts and California had better leave Athens undisturbed in the Greece of old.

For Copeland, as a son of Maine,—the Mrs. Knowlton, of whom I have spoken, used to call him a “bit of Machias delft,”—and for many others, the house in Charles Street held a second magnet in the person of Sarah Orne Jewett—who spent, with her *alter ego* Mrs. Fields, either in Boston or at Manchester-by-the-Sea, all the months in which she could separate herself from her own abode in South Berwick, Maine. In these two ladies the charms of the classical and the continuing New England were singularly united. Old England also was largely present in the books and manuscripts, the pictures on the walls, the dining-room chairs that once belonged to the Duke of Ormonde and were bought in London under the guidance of Charles Dickens. The American past was brought into what was then the present by Mrs. Fields’s habitual references to her friends of former days as “Mr. Emerson,” “Mr. Longfellow,” and all the rest—excepting possibly Hawthorne, whose name, as I recall her use of it,

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

seemed never to need a handle. Besides these ghosts there were many living presences — Louise Imogen Guiney, Willa Cather, Mme. Blanc (“Th. Bentzon”), George Edward Woodberry, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and such relative ancients as Charles Dudley Warner and that vigorous old Chicago parson, Robert Collyer. The feminine segment of the circle may have been a little excessive, and there were grounds for a feeling that the precious and the rarefied did something to the atmosphere. Long before meeting Mrs. Fields I had heard from a Harvard classmate the profane breakfast-table story of her saying to her husband when a crumb of toast lodged in his abundant beard, “Jamie, there is a gazelle in the garden.” It would be a pity to lose such an anecdote, apocryphal as my later knowledge of Mrs. Fields, with her surely saving grace of humor, compels me to believe it. For whatever of the feminine and the esoteric there may have been in all these surroundings, there was a full appreciation of masculine likings for the best of substantial food and pleasant wines, and above all there was the heartiest of constant, generous friendship. The hospitalities of 148, Charles Street, now

### *Initiate of Boston*

long demolished, and of "Thunderbolt Hill" at Manchester led not only into warm personal relations with both Mrs. Fields and Miss Jewett, joined with editorial relations, but into stimulating and educative contacts with much that still survived from the authentic Boston which Mrs. Fields's dear friend and one-time neighbor, Dr. Holmes, had made known to the world over his Breakfast-Table. It was in the house of Mrs. Fields, by the way, that I heard Rufus Choate's daughter, Mrs. Bell, many of whose witty sayings have become classics in Boston, repeat a remark that Dr. Holmes had made to her: "The joke about my saying that the dome of the Boston State House is the hub of the solar system is not the saying itself, but the fact that I really believed it."

When Mrs. Fields died in 1915 I remembered that she had spoken more than once, though somewhat vaguely, of leaving her papers to me. She had shown me from time to time a large cabinet in the reception-room near the front door—a room, by the way, in which a landscape of Edward Lear's adorned one of the walls. The cabinet was packed with letters from everybody who was anybody in the Victorian world, from Dickens and Browning



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

in England, from Emerson, Holmes, and all the greater and lesser Victorians of America. In due time this cabinet was transferred from Charles to Brimmer Street, where I lived, and with it came many manuscript notebooks in which Mrs. Fields had depicted the varied daily life in which through some decades she had played a vividly observant part. The contents of the cabinet are now lodged in the Huntington Library at San Marino, California, the notebooks with the Massachusetts Historical Society; but they did not leave my hands till I had drawn from them a book, *Memories of a Hostess* (1922), in which I had observed Mrs. Fields's wish that no biography of herself should be prepared. As a "Chronicle of Eminent Friendships" it undertook to reproduce the panorama of scenes and personalities of which the talk of Mrs. Fields and Miss Jewett had given me so many retrospective glimpses. Thanks to the material entrusted to me for this use, and to the enduring interest in figures that emerge from it, the book, abundantly illustrated, made a public appeal surpassing that of any other that bears my name, and is still the subject of frequent letters of inquiry from students of American literature.

And here as well as anywhere else I may as

## *Initiate of Boston*

well introduce a priceless letter written soon after the book was published but never sent to me, or seen by me, until some fifteen years had passed. I should not have seen it then had I not happened to become the biographer of John Jay Chapman. Among the mass of letters placed in my hands by his widow was one to her enclosing the following letter to me, written with an evident relish of amusement on Chapman's part, but striking him, when written, as calculated to amuse his wife more than me. Here he was mistaken, as perhaps I was in yielding to Mrs. Chapman's feeling that in my biography of her husband it would be a superfluous illustration of the pleasure he took in abusing his friends. Perhaps after all it does not belong so much to his story as to mine. Here, in any case, is the pertinent—or impertinent—greater portion of it:—

*November 28, 1922*

Dear Mark:—

. . . In endeavoring to lengthen out a lonesome meal I dipped into Mrs. Fields—and looked at the illustrations. Well, I must say, Mark, I never saw a book that on first glance seemed to have less venom in it. People will read more uninteresting facts about deceased authors than they can bear on any other subject—a weakness which

## *A Venture 'in Remembrance*

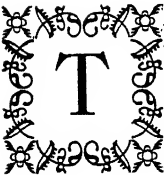
you have preyed upon, you villain. Now please do what I say—and I'll write a memoir of you. Get a big pine box and put in it the contents of your wastepaper basket the day you receive this (the mail of the master craftsman) also a piece of your shaving soap; photograph of the view from your back window; some verses you were ashamed—even you—to print—which were written by Thomas Bailey Aldrich on a pancake; this letter; anything you find on Brimmer Street on your walk to the Atlantic Monthly Press; a pen and ink drawing of Ellery Sedgwick posting a letter containing a cheque to a contributor (the cheque is indicated by Ellery's heroic expression); a portrait of Arlo Bates; a visiting card left by a man you didn't know—very old-fashioned—this to be *mounted* on a full page and entitled How our ancestors did it—and—you see the idea;—but *fill the box*. I will write the letter-press. I think I should call the volume—[*word scratched out and undecipherable*] and O my! if I don't give you a send off! . . . I think I shall call the volume "Whiffs of literature." . . .

Yours affectionately,

JACK

P.S. It just occurs to me that the *letter-press* of your book may be good.

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

HROUGH these early nineties in which Mrs. Fields first befriended me I was filling my veins with that inoculation of printer's ink which Dr. Holmes has called, in effect, the most obstinate of poisons. Verses, reviews, little articles, even a few short stories, now fortunately buried in extinct magazines, found favor with various editors. Even as a *Harvard Monthly* article on Austin Dobson had dated me in college, my first prose contribution to the "body" of the *Atlantic*, an unsigned salute to William Watson as "A Poet of Poetry," by virtue of his own poems on Wordsworth and Tennyson, spoke for the more serious nineties. That decade, in most respects, was of course gay and carefree enough, and through the first half of it I had many reasons to share the general feeling of security and confidence. With so good a friend as Mr. Scudder in the *Atlantic* office, my prospects there seemed tinted with rosy possibilities. Liking people as I frankly did,—and

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

have always done,—the various associations, masculine and feminine, which have been touched upon provided me with elements which might well cause an agreeable present to grow into a satisfying future. But what is an aspiring editor and writer without the full use of his eyes? Mine were beginning to trouble me, though at first not seriously. The oculists to whom I repaired gave me glasses, and lotions, and salves—all to no avail, for the threat of a real impairment, and possible loss, of sight became more and more menacing. My employers, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, were most indulgent, finally to the point of letting me do such work as I could at home, with irregular visits to the office. Obviously this course could be pursued only so long as an early recovery seemed possible. By the spring of 1895 it became clear that this was not to be expected, and there was nothing to be done but for me to write a letter resigning my assistant-editorship, and to seek refuge with my parents. It was with a heavy heart, leaden with the apparent frustration of hopes, both professional and personal, that I turned my back on Boston. Many years later I came upon Jack Chapman's description of the place on a bright

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

June day—looking “like Emerson in a straw hat on a steamboat landing.” If I had possessed the wit to frame such an image, it would have served perfectly to suggest my own view of the Boston I was leaving behind me—perhaps for good and all.

Disheartening as the outlook was, none but an ungrateful dog could have been blind to the good luck of having such parents as mine to take him in. One needs to have reached a certain maturity to place a true value on admirable parents. Many boys at school are proverbially self-conscious about them, and seem to fear that something old-fashioned or queer in these progenitors will discredit their sons in the eyes of their own contemporaries. A son of mine had the satisfaction of dissuading his mother and father from attending his school graduation, on the ground that he did not expect even to receive a diploma—which in fact he did, with two prizes in addition. This was an extreme case, but I do believe that many young men go far into their twenties before appreciating to the full such good qualities as their parents may happen to possess. Sons, and I doubt not daughters, are particularly blessed when their parents live long enough to achieve a complete

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

vindication. Happily I had entered my thirties when my father died, and my mother survived him for thirteen years.

As I was quitting Boston, my father, at eighty-seven, was about to quit the duties of his episcopate, to which his vigor was no longer adequate. His beloved Weetamoe at Bristol had always beckoned to him, and now the time had come for leaving Pennsylvania, after more than fifty years, and transferring his *lares* and *penates* to his native Rhode Island. The arduous processes of dismantling and resettling called less for failing eyes than for willing hands, and these I was glad to lend. There was much dispersal of books and other objects, but enough was saved to convert the house in Bristol into a delightful year-round abode. My father, alas, was to enjoy it for hardly more than a month. After a brief illness he died on August 1, 1895. For the first and only time the actual ending of mortality gave me to see the beauty and majesty with which the hand of death can suddenly transform the human countenance.

Here, then, began for me a period of marked contrast with what had gone before and was to follow, a period of no little value to myself, but

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

of slight interest to anybody else. In a word, I turned farmer for nearly five years. My mother, left with Weetamoe on her hands, plainly needed somebody to help her in the conduct of the farm. There was I, good for not much else, and certainly ill enough prepared to deal effectively with agricultural matters. At least I could, and did, subscribe to a farm journal, send for government pamphlets on phases of farming, institute a system of accounts—which in the end proved nothing but that we seemed to be getting our vegetables, butter, and milk on moderate terms—and I could lend a hand at some of the work about the farm. For a time I delivered milk before breakfast to a few summer customers, but really enjoyed nothing else so much as the haying season, especially when I was seated on the horse-drawn rake. That was farming for you! There were also good moments with the easy-going head-farmer, Michael Callan, who provided me with at least one aphorism which has served me all through life. When I laid before him some such plan as breaking up a field that had been too long in grass, he would come to me the next day and say in his three-dimensional brogue, “The more I think of it, Misther Mark, the less I



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

think of it." There were, besides, a coachman, a faithful "Portagee," and occasional helpers of his race to be dealt with. Altogether I found that I had much to learn. For the worst of the winters, once only for a single month, my mother and I made visits to Philadelphia or Boston, but there were many long evenings in Bristol, with much reading aloud—all of Jane Austen, for example, and *War and Peace*.

Fortunately the trouble with my eyes was of an intermittent, or relapsing, nature. If there were weeks of black patches and dark rooms, when light was a blinding pain, there were also lucid intervals, in which I could read and write with little difficulty. This was my salvation. Indeed I can see now that if I had remained at the editorial desk from which it was such a wrench to part, I might have become a mere cog in the machine of a publishing house—probably to my financial advantage, but surely with loss of the satisfaction to be found in speaking, however feebly, for one's self. It is an old truth that there is nothing truer than the familiar truisms, one of which relates to the afflictions that turn out to be blessings. If only the disguise were not so impenetrable at first!

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

It would be tedious to retrace the slow steps by which I won back the use of my eyes—except to say that a Providence oculist began a long process, continued in Boston, of cutting and burning away—with a fragrance of broiling beefsteak—a superfluity of bone in the upper recesses of my nostrils. Dr. George de Schweinitz of Philadelphia told me, when I once visited him, of a patient, a contributor to the humorous *Puck*, who bore this nasal poking with a red-hot wire as best he could, then quietly took a handkerchief from his pocket and dabbed the back of his neck, just where the instrument of torture might have been expected to emerge. I knew precisely how he felt, and can only hope that the drastic treatment helped this fellow sufferer as it did me—and more promptly, for my disablement kept recurring, though with diminishing frequency and severity, for something like ten years. At least I had received a long training in patience. The miracle of it all has been that now for some thirty years I have not only used but abused my eyes, in all sorts of light, on railway trains, and at unmerciful stretches.

In all this there was little enough that went directly into the making of a Bostonian. Yet the mails

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

were in operation, and it was possible, during my better intervals, to abandon Weetamoe from time to time for brief visits to what Oliver Herford was soon to call the "abandoned farm of literature." Thus I could continue the "Boston Letters" about books and writers which I had begun to contribute to Scribner's little monthly, the *Book Buyer*, edited by Winfield S. Moody. To my place in the *Atlantic* office Walter H. Page, destined soon to succeed Mr. Scudder himself and to attain far greater eminence in publishing and public life, had succeeded. To him I owed many opportunities to keep my hand in as an anonymous contributor to the *Atlantic*, chiefly through book reviews. This was all very well, but not so exciting as another undertaking of the moment. That was nothing less than the publication—no private printing this time!—of my own first book.

Slender and unimportant enough it was—that little collection of verses to which I gave, perhaps too prophetically, the name of *Shadows*. It was produced by Copeland and Day, a firm, now long extinct, described by a wag of the time as "Publishers of First Editions." Such, in essence if not in literal fact, they were. Another name for

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

them might well have been "Philanthropists," for as such they appeared to many budding writers, like myself, who felt themselves prepared to face the public but could not possibly have persuaded a publisher with eyes fixed on "the black" and "the red" to sponsor their wares. Of course that adventurous house could not be expected to survive indefinitely—any more than the many little magazines of a slightly later day which, according to Bert Leston Taylor, "died to make verse free." While they did last, however, Copeland and Day brought forth a list of books, largely of verse, which imparted to anybody represented in it a sense of being in good contemporary company. From England they brought Francis Thompson, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Richard Garnett, and others. Among their American writers were Father Tabb, Bliss Carman, Richard Hovey, Stephen Crane, and I know not how many more who have ratified what Hezekiah Butterworth used to regard as a passport to the columns of the *Youth's Companion*—the belief that "this will enter into anthologies." In physical aspect, be it added, the Copeland and Day books might still be taken as models of the best.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

There was another young publishing house in Boston at the time—Small, Maynard and Company, given less to preciosity and “first editions.” They were, for example, the discoverers and first publishers of “Mr. Dooley.” Walt Whitman was a passion with them, and their close relation with Horace E. Traubel led to important editions of the poet and the writings of his special prophet. To this firm I submitted a plan for a series of “Brief Biographies of Eminent Americans,” proposing myself as editor. The plan was adopted, and the “Beacon Biographies,” little books of approximately 20,000 words, were launched. Bertram Goodhue designed the cover and title-page, of a beauty to which only so perfect a draftsman as he could have given form. The series began modestly with five titles, of which Norman Hapgood’s *Daniel Webster* was one, and my own *Phillips Brooks*, antedating the “official biography” by Dr. Allen, was another. These appeared in 1899, and for more than ten years the little books kept coming out, until there were thirty-one of them. Every such series is uneven, and in this there were a few volumes in which I could take little pride. In only one instance could I charge

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

this to anything but my own choice of writers. The exception was the *Emerson* by F. B. Sanborn, to whom the publishers committed themselves for this volume without my knowledge. The chief glory of the series was Owen Wister's *Grant*, and in that case I can pride myself, with respect to this first and best of Wister's biographical writings, on having divined that the author of *The Virginian* could tell a good story outside the field of fiction. There was another first biography—and here, besides, an only book—by another contributor whose name has come to stand for much—Ellery Sedgwick. His *Thomas Paine* appeared early in the series, and called forth the neatest of puns from one of his colleagues in the *Youth's Companion* office, with which he was then associated—but perhaps only those graybeards who remember the patent medicines of forty years ago will appreciate John Mack's synthesized title, "Paine's Ellery Compound." Then there were Copeland's *Edwin Booth*, and, as time went on, John Macy's *Edgar Allan Poe*, Lindsay Swift's *Benjamin Franklin*, Worthington C. Ford's *George Washington*, and Brand Whitlock's *Abraham Lincoln*. The correspondence and consultations involved in bringing

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

all these books to birth quickened a number of friendships, old and new, and must have served, even while I remained in Bristol, to identify me both with biographical writing and with Boston.

The project of the "Beacon Biographies" might never have occurred to me but for one piece of work which preceded them. This was the production of a series of papers, "chiefly biographical," for the *Bookman*, at the invitation of its editor, James MacArthur, to whom my *Book Buyer* letters had probably made me known. In writing them at Bristol, with occasional pilgrimages to the Providence and Boston Athenæums—all under the limitations of recurrently disabled eyes—I became impressed with the fact that, between the official, often two-volume, biographies of the more important American worthies, and the widely scattered writings about them, largely in magazines, there was a place, as Jared Sparks had demonstrated long before, to be filled by more substantial monographs, little books written with authority for readers who might welcome sound fact and intelligent opinion but lacked the time and energy to dig these elements out for themselves. Hence in due course, the "Beacon Biographies," and hence,

## *Farming in Dark Glasses*

immediately, my own first book of impressive proportions, *American Bookmen*, published in the autumn of 1898. In everybody's memory I suppose a few special moments stand out in red or gold. One of these has flashed before me again and again as I have visited the Bristol Post Office, and remembered the elation with which I bore a package of twelve "author's copies" from Dodd, Mead and Company in New York to the beach-wagon waiting at the steps that faced the building, and drove my precious burden back to "the Farm." Of course I did not realize then so clearly as I do now that the book was a rather pedestrian, and purely derivative, performance. Happily there were then no Vernon Parringtons or Van Wyck Brookses to establish standards from which I should have suffered sadly in comparison. As a matter of fact, the book met with quite as decent a reception as it deserved. One comment upon it seemed to me undeserved at the time, and the mere fact that I have remembered it all these years may indicate that it seems so still. The *Nation's* reviewer found in the book only one marked peculiarity—that the author gave no indication of having read the authors he described. Well, at



### *A Venture in Remembrance*

this late day it would be futile to argue the point. A pious old cousin used to remind me, in still earlier days, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you!" That danger, first and last, is one to which few of us are unduly exposed.

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

LET me not fall, as I proceed, into the absurdity of dilating upon all the books I have written, now nearing two score—plus about an equal number edited—in any such detail as I have permitted myself with respect to the first three. The earliest bantlings are bound to receive special attention. Let me rather turn again to my translation into a Bostonian. Nothing marked this process more clearly than the title of my next book, *Boston, the Place and the People*. Written at the invitation of the Macmillan Company, and published in 1903, it was dedicated as follows:

TO F. H. Q. H.  
MY BEST INHERITANCE  
FROM THE CITY OF HER FATHERS

On September 21, 1899, this best friend had become my wife. Weetamoe remained my home, and became hers, for more than a year, near the end of which my son Quincy was born. My eyes

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

had then grown enough stronger to permit half-time employment with the "star-bright Companion of my Youth." Such indeed it had been to me, and when no unoccupied desk could be found in the sparsely populated *Atlantic* office the hospitable old *Companion*, with its indefinitely expandable staff, re-opened its doors at my knock, and provided me with unexacting full-time work and moderate salary, to both of which, for more than a dozen years, I was free to add at my will. It was early in this period that the Boston book I have mentioned made its appearance and, I dare say, caused me to seem more a Bostonian than in fact I had become. At least I soon found myself a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society and a Trustee of the Boston Athenæum, that blessed sanctuary of books in which Gamaliel Bradford, an inveterate frequenter of it through life, wished that he might lie in death. For some forty years I have haunted it myself, in capacities ranging from Ticket-holder through Proprietor and Trustee to Director, and then again Trustee. What I have found in the Library, and turned to uses of my own in its quiet alcoves, lies beyond telling. Approaching it day after day, I sometimes

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

wonder whether I may not be likened to the inanimate object in a story that Mr. Charles K. Bolton, long librarian of the Athenæum, used to tell. That object was a little round hat worn by a strangely dressed woman who came with great regularity to the Library. One day a strong wind from the west blew the hat from her head as she passed the Park Street corner. Away it rolled along the sidewalk, past Goodspeed's and other doorways, keeping just beyond her agitated pursuit—until it reached the entrance to the Athenæum, turned abruptly to the right, and came to rest on the steps of the oddly numbered 10½, Beacon Street.

There are many stories of the frequenters of this institution, and one more must be told. This has to do with another woman, elderly, gravely devoted to scholarly pursuits, who found some Radcliffe girls, preparing themselves in the top-floor reading room for examinations, too much for her equanimity, and exclaimed: "Here they come, with their lipsticks and fur coats, calling for serious books—adding hypocrisy to their other vices!" Hawthorne once saw a ghost in the Athenæum. What have others not seen!

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

It is through the lens of stories such as these, whether condensed into anecdotes or expanded into novels, whether the lens distort or clarify, that Boston has long been an object of close, and usually irritated, observation.

As I write these words—in midsummer of 1940—I find in the *New York Times Book Review* a notice of a recent, and perhaps already forgotten, addition to the long and constantly extending list of novels with Boston for their scene. Thus the reviewer's comment begins: "Alone among cities, Boston has no redeeming qualities. Such at least would seem to be the verdict of present-day American novelists. Their agreement is so general that the moment you learn a new novel has a Boston background you at once, and as it were automatically, expect it to deal with frustrations, inhibitions, provincialisms, frigidity, dullness, and eventual submission or escape on the part of some rebellious hero or heroine."

There is a large element of truth in this view of Boston fiction. The novelists who produce it have managed to give the impression that the place is populated to a prevailing extent by shabby characters leading shabby lives, outwardly respect-

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

able but inwardly ill-conditioned. I wonder if I should have contributed to this impression if I had ever written a novel myself. *Boston, the Place and the People*, and a number of later books, dealing with persons and institutions of a pronounced local quality, were in no sense works of the imagination, but here and there may have served some purpose of suggestion in a novelist's quest of material. Twice I have attempted to record in brief compass my own observation of the Boston scene. Two articles, published with an interval of more than twenty years, the first in *Harper's Weekly*, the second in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, embodied these efforts. Now I cannot better serve the purpose of suggesting the Boston I was coming to know, through reading and through living, than by helping myself to passages from each of these articles. Must the vitality and persistence of Boston as a topic be demonstrated only by those who can see no redeeming quality in the place? I think not.

Plodding home one afternoon some years ago through the Public Garden and carrying a green cloth bag for papers and who-knows-what-else, of a pattern which once enjoyed a wide vogue in Bos-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

ton, I noticed that two unmistakable sight-seers from other regions of America were eying me closely, and when I had passed them I heard the woman announcing solemnly to the man on the bench beside her, "They all carry them."

Then I knew that I was becoming, or had already become, at least outwardly a typical figure. I was reminded, moreover, of an earlier spectacle—that of a poor Italian woman, observed opposite the Arlington Street Church facing the same Public Garden. There she knelt before the statue of William Ellery Channing. If she sought a saint in a consecrated shrine, and found something of the sort, it must be admitted that the saint was of a variety unknown in her native land. But the circumstance is worth noting, merely for its relation to the fact that most strangers to Boston are looking for something to square with their preconceived ideas. They frequently resemble the Italian woman in thinking they find what they seek. So, with a difference, it may have been with a begging tramp who is said to have approached an eminent Bostonian—not a saint of the Channing pattern—as he stood one day outside the Somerset Club, talking with two or three friends. The beg-

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

gar received a rough dismissal, moved on as he was ordered, but returned, touched his hat, and asked deferentially, "Would you mind, sir, if I spent the night in Boston?"

In the first of the articles to which I have referred I brought together, in 1908, a number of observations of Boston from without. Visitors from England in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, President Dwight of Yale just before the nineteenth, Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, Howells, Henry James, H. G. Wells, American journalists and others included in S. M. Crothers's broad category of "New Yorkers and that kind of people" were brought to the witness stand, and bore their testimony *pro* and *con*, very much as one would expect. Here were acknowledgments of merit, and plenty of amused censure. The tokens of identification, for Boston and the Bostonian, were amply provided.

When the second article, "Boston from Within," was written in 1932, I had come to wonder whether, in spite of my outland origin, the visible token of the green bag had been matched by an inward counterpart. Perhaps it had. Certainly I had met with the experiences of a Bostonian who



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

wanders South and West. Introduced as a visitor, he is often embarrassed to note the laying of a special stress on the information that he "comes from Boston." What does this suggest—that allowances must be made for anyone from so benighted a spot? Or is it to intimate—as the ironic tone in which it is often spoken leads one to doubt—"Now we shall hear something worth listening to"? Whatever wit or wisdom the Bostonian so introduced may possess—and the chances that he will prove a monopolist are extremely slender—can hardly fail to desert him at such a launching, so that he rides the waves of conversation even less buoyantly than otherwise he might. Thus placed apart he wonders whether he really is apart, spiritually and socially as well as geographically, from the overwhelming majority of his countrymen. He does not want to be, whatever the indications may suggest to the contrary.

In the winter of 1940 a Boston newspaper contained a diverting "story," of a certain significance. It recorded the fact that a National Convention of Hairdressers was meeting here, and that its members had changed their designation to "Cosmetologists." The president of the convention

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

issued a statement: "The reason that this movement to change the name of hairdressers was inaugurated in Boston is that Boston is held in the highest esteem in the rest of the country." This tribute from the Cosmetologists is not echoed by the novelists.

Various ideas contribute to the general concept of Boston widely entertained beyond its borders. One of them seems to be that the inhabitants of the place regard themselves as somewhat superior to their fellow countrymen, and that they hold themselves aloof even from seeming equals who may in reality be their superiors. The Honorable F. J. Stimson, in his *My United States*, gives many tokens of knowing something about his Boston. "Modesty, therefore lack of self-confidence," he declares, "was (and is) a fault of Boston in character—just as undue self-consciousness is in manners." Generalizations are properly suspect, and certainly this dictum is not applicable to all of Boston. Indeed all of Boston presents a widely variegated social landscape: the young and the old, in what is known as "society," go their separate ways; the different regions of the city and of the suburbs are farther apart than any measurements of dis-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

tance would suggest; even the most enlightened Irish and the Hebrew sections of the community are in no closer contact with the older New England sections than with each other. One is left asking just who the typical, the representative Bostonian may be. Surely no inhabitant of the place who walks the streets with his eyes open can imagine that anything he, or anybody else, may say or write, in brief compass, can be more than fractional.

In recent years the residents of Beacon Hill have celebrated Christmas Eve by filling the windows of their charming old houses with lighted candles and other appropriate objects of beauty, while carolers wander from street to street, and a milling crowd of sight-seers brings the scene into a darkened, chilling semblance to the paths that lead from the Harvard Stadium after a football game with Yale. The occasion has outgrown its original beauty, and its original reverence. Only a year or two ago, a quartet—carolers quite astray—stood on the doorsteps beside my own front windows on Louisburg Square and burst into a song of which I succeeded in catching a single line: "We sober up on wood-alcohol." If other songs than

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

carols rend the air, it is nevertheless true that many quiet and delighted sight-seers assemble to regard old Boston at its architectural best, and the portraits and furniture that show through the lighted windows provide the setting for a group of Bostonians in which the distinctive color of the city is preserved perhaps more clearly than anywhere else.

Out of this and its kindred group in the Back Bay proceeds the Bostonian both of comic legend and of respected fact. From the same region of the Hill and the "made land" beneath it proceed also, however, the descendants of the Unitarian seceders from a too rigid Calvinism and of the pre-Civil War "Come-outers" in politics and social reform—followers of a liberal and independent way of thinking which still holds the excesses of uniformity and passing orthodoxies in check.

One social phenomenon, making for a stable—not to say static—outlook in Boston is suggested by the names of the leading Federalists cited in Charles Warren's admirable *Jacobin and Junto* as the warmest of Jefferson's antagonists in Massachusetts: "a group of Essex County men—Theophilus Parsons, John Lowell, and Jonathan Jack-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

son of Newburyport, George Cabot and Nathan Dane of Beverly, and Timothy Pickering and Benjamin Goodhue of Salem"; with the addition of "Fisher Ames, Theodore Sedgwick, Tristram Dalton, John Lowell, Jr., Stephen Higginson, Josiah Quincy, Caleb Strong, Harrison Gray Otis, Francis Dana, and Robert Treat Paine." Not all of their offspring have remained anti-Jeffersonians, but it is certainly worth noting that, with hardly an exception, their descendants of the same name have held their place in the same Boston circle, colleagues in many relationships of life, up to the present day. It is perhaps in that circle that your truest Bostonian of all is to be found, and it may be worth adding that when I first read Mr. Warren's list at Cotuit on Cape Cod, it occurred to me that within about a mile from where I sat there were summer residents, with occasional visitors, sprung from nearly all these Federalist figures.

The Boston which these names represent has profited from no such replenishment from without as New York, for example, has constantly experienced—to its great advantage. The instance of a genial and beloved historian—James Ford Rhodes—who came to Boston from Cleveland in

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

his middle years and made himself extraordinarily a part of the life of his adopted city is almost impossible to duplicate. John T. Morse, Jr., in his *Memoir of Colonel Henry Lee* relates of his own kindred what has more frequently happened, even with newcomers from a neighboring county, and more than a century ago: "In fact, Lees, Cabots, Jacksons and Higginsons knew each other well in Essex County, and had a satisfying belief that New England morality and intellectuality had produced nothing better than they were; so they very contentedly made a little clique of themselves, and inter-married very much, with a sure and cheerful faith that in such alliances there can be no blunder."

Now a little "superiority complex" is well known to be a dangerous thing. The Bostonian who is tempted to cultivate it with respect to his native society may be reminded that Charles Francis Adams, the second of his name, designated it in his *Autobiography* "a boy-and-girl institution," and went on: "I may say that in the course of my life I have tried Boston socially on all sides: I have summered it and wintered it, tried it drunk and tried it sober; and, drunk or sober, there's

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

nothing in it—save Boston!” The “boy-and-girl” quality of society in Boston is of course due to the proximity of Harvard College. That institution holds such a place in the community that when one hears “the President” mentioned there is no certain telling whether Harvard or the United States is the organization over which he presides. Indeed, it was credibly reported in Cambridge not many years ago that on one occasion while President Lowell was serving on a commission appointed by President Taft an inquirer for him at University Hall was informed that “the President is in Washington, seeing Mr. Taft.” There are still those who look back with a certain wistfulness on the days when a gentleman of the older school, Edmund Quincy, recalled by Mr. Stimson, kept on his writing table the Harvard Triennial Catalogue—the changes to a Quinquennial and to English in place of Latin were still to come—and applied its measurements to every name that came up for identification: “If a man was in it, that’s who he was; if he wasn’t, who was he?”

Of course all this has changed, like nearly everything else in the world. Yet looking about within the enclosure of Boston—for enclosed it certainly

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

is in comparison with other places on the main-traveled roads of American life—are there not still some distinctive marks of its own which account both for the affection it breeds within and for the mingled respect, amusement, and irritation which it seems to invite from without? These stigmata are hardly to be recognized in circles that may be called respectively—and no more in Boston than elsewhere—the “hunting set” and the “hunted.” The opulent, with pleasure and fashion for the main objects of their lives, and the really poor, the poverty-hunted, who have to devote all their energies to keeping alive on any terms, are much alike wherever you encounter them. Yet I venture to believe that among the more favored the hunt in Boston extends itself, perhaps a little more frequently than elsewhere, to other objects than the fox and his kindred; and that among the less favored, especially among those whose economic level is somewhat above zero, there is a healthy sharing of interest with the more favored in the things of the mind and the spirit—books, pictures, music, endeavors of one sort and another towards the betterment of the human lot.

For the bases of such generalization, one does not



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

look to skyscrapers, clearinghouse reports, and rapidly mounting census figures. They are not found in bigness and traffic jams—even in traffic control. They may be sought in various directions, but for the moment let us concentrate on one. In all the history of Boston the mere proximity of an influential College and University has been counted a pervasive leavening influence. Now it is not only Harvard, but the Institute of Technology, and a congeries of other colleges and professional schools, both for men and for women, all within the short radius of that circle which disgorges its contents—or such fractions thereof as do not come “over the road”—at the Park Street subway station. It is not so much that these institutions—to say nothing of Dartmouth and other colleges scattered through New England—are constantly pouring their graduates into the life of the city; they are distributed also through many other regions. It is rather that men and women, literally by thousands, who are devoting their lives to the study and teaching of higher branches of learning, in all the humanities, sciences, and professions, are permanent members of the larger local community, touching at one point or another the lives

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

of a vast number of the persons who constitute it. The academic gentry can think and dress and look as they please, and if a Bostonian of the straitest sect of Beacon Hill elects to think and dress and look like them, he—or she—need not turn solely to his “Come-outer” forbears for example and encouragement.

All this, it may be objected, has to do with the Boston of tradition and its surviving inheritances from the past. What is to be said, in a more concrete vein, of the Boston of today? It would be foolish to defend some of its peculiarities. H. G. Wells was not to be ignored when he wrote some years ago: “The capacity of Boston, it would seem, was just sufficient, but no more than sufficient, to comprehend the whole achievement of the human intellect up, let us say, to the year 1875 A.D. Then an equilibrium was established. At or about that year Boston filled up.” Since then—or say rather since 1895—there can be little question that the “Indian Summer” through which Mr. Van Wyck Brooks found it and the rest of New England to be passing has been a season truly defined. The older Boston has itself to thank for the consequences of its aloofness from the newer Boston.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

It is hardly conceivable that the vision of its society at large might not have been greatly increased by a readier welcome, such as New York has given, to the valuable racial forces of later arrival in America.

In recent years there have been a few signs of improvement. The interest and mastery of individuals of the newer stocks are beginning to be recognized in matters with which they have not hitherto been identified. The dominance of the old New England breed in the control of such characteristic local institutions as, let us say, a leading bank or business enterprise, a museum, a hospital, a venerable university, is still a noticeable fact. Into these territories, however, there has been a small infusion of new blood, though it is not to be compared with that which has transformed the political field. Once the stronghold of New England Puritanism, Boston has indeed become, statistically, a Roman Catholic city, with the Irish in a considerable majority over the Italians and other adherents of their faith. Had the best representatives of this and the Jewish element in the population been made to feel less alien to the older Boston, a recent Irish governor of Massachusetts

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

might have had no occasion to declare, as he did, that the citizens of his race and religion, now in the position to which their majority entitled them, would proceed to deal with the outnumbered as they had been dealt with in the past, and relegate the older stock to an inferior place. That is for the future to disclose. For the present—the old breed is not extinct, and the new, which will yet be old, is a mine with possibilities of richness yet to be tested to the full.

Certainly there are monuments from the past and foundations for the years to come that have nothing whatever in common with the general decadence which novelists have been assiduous to suggest as the ultimate characteristic of the place. A local bar which has produced Justices of the Supreme Court of such powerful influence upon national thinking today as Holmes and Brandeis, a hospital continuing its leadership in the world of medicine ever since the anesthetic use of ether was first demonstrated within its walls, a symphony orchestra admittedly without a superior—but no, I refuse to drop into a Chamber of Commerce vein, and the catalogue of which this suggests a beginning must be cut short. All that I wish to intimate

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

is that the Boston of fact is not dominated by the poor thwarted, futile Bostonians of fiction. It remains for a novelist to make this bit of realism, unfamiliar in fiction, generally known. Pages like these will not spread it far.

The strong personal leadership of individuals which Boston has needed is a universal need. Not many years ago a commentator on the Saturday Club of Boston—which in a moment of reversion to his Broadway surroundings he afterwards called the “Saturday Night Club”—announced that “it had about eighty members, all leaders in the thought of their time.” Eighty such members in a single small club, even if distributed through what have become more than its eighty years of existence, would be doing well. Contemporary conditions cannot be said to lend themselves to a large output of “foremost citizens.” Perhaps there have always been too many Bostonians who at heart have agreed with a reported saying of the late William Everett: “When I am in a small minority, I believe I am right. When I am in a minority of one, I know I am right.”

The element of dissent may not be as powerful in Boston as it once was. It is not, however, in the

## *The Boston of Fiction and Fact*

old abode of the Abolitionists, the Mugwumps of 1884, and the Anti-Imperialists who followed them, that one may look for any single way of thinking. If the Sacco-Vanzetti case brought from many quarters of the world a wholesale condemnation of the Boston community, there is this to be said about it: that none were more grieved and outraged by the execution of the two Italians than their Boston sympathizers from all walks of life; and that none worked harder to stay the final punishment than an ardent minority in Boston, at whose repeated urgings the law's delays were protracted over seven years, always with the hope that the prisoners might be found guiltless.

Is it worth while, then, for the Bostonian himself, whether sterling or plated, to concern himself too deeply over outer impressions? Is he of so contented a provinciality as to be invincibly irritating to the inhabitants of other provinces? Sometimes it looks so—as the experience of an undiluted young Bostonian traveling some years ago in the West may suggest. The train was passing through a region of beautiful mountain scenery. Finding himself alone with a single passenger, apparently from the West, on the rear platform of the observation

### *A Venture in Remembrance*

car, the Bostonian ventured a remark upon the magnificence of all that lay about them. With what result? The fellow passenger rose from his chair, declaring, "If Columbus had happened to land on the Pacific instead of the Atlantic coast, Boston would never have been heard of," and left the well-meaning New England traveler alone on the platform, acutely conscious of the fact that for no discoverable reason beyond that of being a Bostonian he was simply more than the rugged son of the West could bear.

Perhaps it is best to let it go at that.

## Confessions of a Biographer

**B**EFORE embarking on this long digression about the city I was beginning to know when my *Boston, the Place and the People* was dedicated to my wife, we had become householders on Mt. Vernon Street, close to the "Hole-in-the-Ground" restaurant of my earliest Boston days, and only a few steps more from her family's house on Charles Street. In every other book of mine published during the next thirty years, I might well have made public acknowledgment of what I owed to her gift of acute and sensitive criticism. Far from desiring any recognition of the qualities of which this gift was compounded—her many sympathies and that perfect sense of fitness and proportion which makes for a luminous humor—I believe that, but for her deeply instinctive shrinking from personal notice of every sort, she would really have preferred to any other possible dedication one of her own ironic invention:—



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

To that Daughter of Boston  
Whose censure and ridicule  
Have vastly complicated my task,  
I dedicate this book  
At her own earnest wish.

Throughout her life I lent my hand, with a reluctance I am now free to acknowledge, to her own unswerving efforts to hide her light under a bushel. In an early stage of our friendship I discovered her gift for writing, and was instrumental in bringing stories of hers to the attention of *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and other magazines, in which they were printed, always under a pseudonym. Three little books,—*The Opal*, *The Notion-Counter*, and *Small Wares*,—besides many fugitive writings, all under assumed names, or none, followed in course of time. I refrain from saying all I should like to say about them. When one of them was praised in her presence, she said to me, "That should no more be mentioned than if it were an illegitimate child." A story I remember hearing Miss Jewett tell seemed to have its bearing upon this aversion from notice. It was the story of an old woman in London so reduced in circumstances that she was obliged to sell sprats on the street.

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

To this end she posted herself where few could see her on the sidewalk of a small, dark street, and there, in a faint voice, kept saying, "Sprats, sprats, —I hope nobody will hear me!"

If ever a New Englander subscribed to the doctrine of

Praise to the face  
Is an open disgrace

it was my wife. As Jane Austen wrote of Anne Elliot, "It was a great object with her to escape all enquiry and eclat." For myself, I could never cease to admire the wit, felicity, and understanding that marked the best things she wrote. Of course the best was not always; but in everything she wrote, from her many postcards to her few books, there was a strongly individual quality, always distinctive, sometimes distinguished—if distinction lies in an intelligence, grace, and compassion rarely encountered in the common run of human beings. In this opinion I am sure I was not alone, as possibly I am in seeing, in a small photograph she gave me long before our marriage, the face that remained unchanged in my eyes to the end of her days.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

With such a critic on the hearth, my writings, from about 1900 on, should have been better than they were. From that time, up to the undertaking of this narrative, I have rarely been without a piece of biographical or historical work to which I could give all the time at my disposal. It is only in recent years that this time has not been seriously curtailed by the obligations of daily work in editorial offices. Most of the too many books I have produced were written because somebody asked me to write them. In all but a few instances, in which no adequate payment for my labors could be expected from royalties, I have been content to receive what the books themselves might earn. Contentment is said to be great riches. I have found it so, though by no means in terms of financial rewards.

First, among substantial biographies, came the *Life and Letters of George Bancroft* in two volumes. The widow of his son, John C. Bancroft, —prompted, I believe, by the confidence of my friend, Charles Bruen Perkins, that I was capable of the task,—asked me to undertake it. Others, of greater experience, must have turned away from this opportunity before it came to me. It meant

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

four years of hard, singlehanded work, completed in 1908, seventeen years after Bancroft had died. This lapse of time should be recorded as a warning to biographers. If any man's life is to be written, no matter what a figure he has cut in the world, let it be with reasonable promptness. The waters of public interest close all too soon over a disappearing head. Bancroft had died, at ninety-one, in 1891, and when my book appeared, he was more a tradition, "lapped in lead," than a living memory. The book, however, seems to have had its uses with students of history, and was the first to make any noticeable contribution to the survival of my labors through that pale immortality of footnotes which may speak for me hereafter.

The material for this biography came to me, at the *Youth's Companion* office, in three enormous "Saratoga trunks," packed full of papers. I remember well the sinking of my heart as I peered into these depths of manuscript and wondered whether I could possibly draw a living man out of them. So it has always been. Probably every biographer, on opening the boxes of correspondence, diaries, memoranda, newspaper clippings, the accumulations of a busy lifetime, gathered and

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

placed in his hands through the pious care of those who do not look upon old papers as mere brands for the burning, has felt the same misgiving.

Whatever I may have achieved for Bancroft, I did, quite incidentally, accomplish a sort of resurrection in another quarter. Though I have told the story elsewhere—in my *Harvard War Memoirs*—it will perhaps bear retelling here, where it certainly belongs. The upshot of it is that but for one discovery I made in the Bancroft papers the list of graduates of Harvard College, throughout its long course, might never have contained, in the twentieth century, its single representative of the name and blood of the seventeenth-century John Harvard. Thus it came to pass. Among the letters received by George Bancroft, in 1848, when he was Minister to England, was one from his immediate predecessor, Edward Everett, asking him to seek out a Reverend John Harvard in Plymouth, a Wesleyan scion of the earlier Reverend John Harvard's family, and present to him a copy of Josiah Quincy's *History of Harvard University* which Everett was sending to Bancroft for that purpose. It happened, at the time of this discovery, that my friend, the late Louis A. Holman,

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

then an "art editor" of the *Youth's Companion*, later well known as a dealer in prints and a student of Keats, was on the point of going to England for researches of his own. He complied gladly with my suggestion that if he should find himself in Plymouth it would be interesting to look for surviving traces of the John Harvard of 1848. This he did to such good purpose that he found in London the descendants of the Plymouth ministers, among them a promising schoolboy, Lionel de Jersey Harvard. Returned to America, Holman kept in close touch with the boy and his parents. Generous officials and graduates of Harvard College, to whom I reported these circumstances, made it possible, a few years later, for the boy to come to America, as the first and only Harvard of Harvard. He was a shining credit to his name and his university. Dying in action in the World War, he left an infant son, Peter, behind him, and to this young man, in 1936, it fell to represent his family at the Harvard Tercentenary celebration. More had come out of that Bancroft trunk than I could possibly have anticipated in 1908.

It has always seemed to me that a writer is not done with his book until it has been printed and

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

read, and has produced its effect upon intelligent opinion. There is often something to be learned from the reviews, letters, and spoken comment which it calls forth—something that may be turned to account in one's next piece of work. In the light of a long experience, some generalizations may be drawn from the reception accorded to my life of Bancroft and to later books of mine. It is fair to say that the common run of book reviewing, thirty or forty years ago, especially in the newspapers, commanded more of a writer's respect than it does today. Of course there are notable exceptions in the daily press of the present time, but I believe many writers must have shared my discouragement at a certain contemporary type of book review. This is the species of comment in which the reviewer assumes omniscience on the general subject of the book under criticism, and then reveals, not to the casual reader but to the writer of the book, the grim fact that every particle of the knowledge with which his mind appears to be stored is derived from the book itself. Of course the art of camouflage calls for skill, but the American author who provides the material for it cannot help wishing that here at home there were a few more critical journals

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

or columns giving the impression constantly produced by the *Times Literary Supplement* of London—that a book has been sent for review to somebody possessing some knowledge relating to it before he reads that book.

This is not to say that when my *Bancroft* appeared there were many such reviewers. I do feel, however, that there was a more general assumption, on the part of editors and reviewers, that their readers were entitled to a serious study of serious books. It is the business of editors to know their public, and it may well be that the public was then more serious-minded than it is today. Certainly there is now no such “feature” in any American newspaper as the articles which Mayo W. Hazeltine of the New York *Sun* used to contribute to every Sunday issue of that paper, of which an entire page was devoted to his extraordinarily skillful condensation of a single book. It was not so much a review as a leisurely abstract of the book, and—to the author’s loss—it may have caused many readers to feel that they need not read the book. In the case of my *Bancroft*, I remember, Hazeltine devoted almost one whole page to Volume I and another, three weeks later, to Volume II. This is



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

a sort of mass-memory of a vanished phenomenon. More particularly I recall a letter about the book, from Dr. Weir Mitchell. On looking it up after these many years I find that he made this remark of broad application: "I have always said if we could see all of a man's letters, notes and checks we would know all about him, but what biography gives us these?" If the evidence of stubs in old checkbooks could be introduced in courts of biography, the results might certainly be enlivening. One recollection of the *Bancroft* notices is that Professor William M. Sloane of Columbia, who had served as secretary to Bancroft in the Berlin Embassy, made me rub my eyes when he called my book, in his review of it in the *Atlantic*, a "magisterial" biography. Such terms fix themselves in a mind that has never been wonted to them.

If I quote another commendation of my *Bancroft*, it is only because of its relation to what was soon to follow. This came to me in a letter from Charles Eliot Norton, whose end was near at hand, containing these words, honeyed as his words so often were: "Bancroft is happy in having such a biographer. It is the final piece of good fortune

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

which was distinguished in its later half, after New England had been left, by its external felicities." At Harvard, intent upon courses in the English Department, I had made the mistake of missing the instruction of Norton. But I had come to know him since leaving college, and, because my wife was a friend of his daughters, had tasted from time to time of his old-world hospitality at "Shady Hill" in Cambridge. All these circumstances, I take it, led to the invitation to join with Miss Sara Norton, his eldest daughter, the perfect embodiment of her social, artistic, and intellectual inheritances, in editing her father's letters. There was much to learn from an accomplished collaborator to whom he had transmitted so many of his own qualities and points of view, and also from the studies of many sources required for comment and annotation upon the letters themselves. This was in itself a piece of research into New England and European backgrounds which, with other labors of its kind that have fallen to my lot, might, at the proper time and place, have rendered me a hopeful candidate for the Ph.D. degree I never sought.

A portrait, as Sargent has often been credited

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

with saying, is a picture in which there is something wrong about the mouth. This is of course particularly true of portraits painted for "the family," and, as every biography is, or should be, a portrait—a "slow-motion" portrait—it is subject to the same limitation. How is it then with the biographer, who must perform his task with a daughter or widow looking over his shoulder? I can only say that in my own experience this has not proved nearly so formidable as several warnings had led me to expect. I think I can count on the fingers of one hand the omissions and modifications of any importance which widows and daughters have persuaded me to make. In nearly every instance these have been either immaterial or beneficial. Only once or twice, and then for reasons which argued more harm than good for final resistance on my part, have I yielded to such feminine persuasions. Vastly more often my own persuasions have prevailed.

Unless my memory now betrays me, Miss Sara Norton acceded to my plea for printing an expression of her father's about Lincoln in November, 1862: "I am very much afraid a domestic cat will not answer when one wants a Bengal tiger."

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

Norton came soon to value Lincoln at his true worth, but I thought at the time, and still think, that this illustration of the long-continued misgivings in the North about Lincoln was well worth recording. Of course I did not foresee that many years later, in preparing a sketch of Richard Norton for the Harvard War Memoirs, I was to be struck by the son's inheritance not only of his father's handwriting, but, at least in one particular, of the paternal habit of thought and expression, for thus I found him to be writing, in 1916, of Woodrow Wilson: "If the White House sheltered an eagle instead of a pouter-pigeon . . ." Who shall say that a half-century does much to the New England point of view?

Before quitting Mr. Norton, I must set down one personal remembrance, not recorded in the *Letters*. Early in the 1900's, my wife and I were paying a brief visit to his house at Ashfield. There and then, more fully than at any other place or time, I was given to see his grace and charm as a host, and to understand what the multitude of Harvard students who had fallen under his spell must have won from it. The special remembrance in question suggests their opportunity of learning not

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

to think more highly than they ought to think of their own America. I was possessed, perhaps obsessed, at the time with the need of an American Dictionary of Biography which should do for our country what the *Dictionary of National Biography* had done for England. My zeal was leading me to lay the project before several publishers, who withheld their acceptance of it—largely, I believe, because I could not approach them with the combined authority so happily brought to bear in later years by the Council of Learned Societies, the late Adolph S. Ochs, and their spokesman, that learned and admirable mentor of biography, the late J. Franklin Jameson. My immature project was one on which I felt that Mr. Norton's advice would be of special value. So we discussed it, one sunny morning, pacing up and down in his garden. He listened with all sympathy and courtesy to my story. "How many volumes," he said at last, "do you think the Dictionary will require?" "Well," I replied, "in view of the fact that in England, with its thousand years of history, sixty volumes were found a fit beginning, here, I should say, twenty would be a reasonable number." Then, very sweetly and gently, spoke the Norton of tradition: "I think

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

—not more—than three.” May I be absolved from boasting if I add that events have justified my estimate, and that the Dictionary of my early dream has come into its valuable existence with precisely twenty volumes?

The books about Bancroft and Norton provided the bearings on which my general course as a biographer has been laid. Some years later, Barrett Wendell rationalized it for me when I found that in his life of Cotton Mather he had pursued the method of presenting his subject “on his own terms”—a method which I had already adopted, and applied in time to Wendell himself. This was to show forth the subject as fully as possible through his own letters and diaries, together with recorded first-hand impressions of trustworthy contemporaries, and thus to place the larger burden of representation on his own shoulders. I have found myself, moreover, in agreement with Mr. Allan Nevins in his avowal: “I feel, too, that if a man is worth a biography, he is worthy of the sympathy of his biographer.”

On the completion of each of my tasks in this field I have realized that another biographer, dealing with precisely the same material, might

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

have produced quite a different book, so important is the matter of selection and emphasis. I have recognized also the limiting conditions of my own mind, which copes more naturally with the concrete and the particular than with philosophic generalizations. There has been a certain comfort in reflecting that, incapable as I am of the penetrating interpretations of writers like Parrington, Gamaliel Bradford, and—pre-eminently—Van Wyck Brooks, their critical studies would lack a base line of departure without such records as books like mine have spread before them. It has taken a sort of steam-shovel persistency to plow my way through the masses of manuscript with which from time to time I have been confronted. Bradford once wrote to me in terms of amazement at the labor a single biography had evidently cost me in comparison with any corresponding production of his own. *Per contra* I have had more than one occasion to make obeisance to Van Wyck Brooks for the exciting account to which he has turned some of the self-revelations which biographies of mine have exposed to his eye. This is the work of a specialist in analysis. It has always seemed to me that one responsibility of the biographer who deals

## *Confessions of a Biographer*

first with the history of any individual is to make the amplest possible provision of material, from which the analyst who may appear later on the scene can erect his own structure of theory and interpretation. Is this merely a piece of self-justification on my part?

Dr. Johnson's dictum, "Sir, the biographical part of literature is what I love most," is thrice familiar. Out of those who have agreed with him there are relatively few who have tasted the pleasures of the biographer himself. "Sleepless themselves to give their readers sleep" was written of "pensive poets," not of biographers. "Wakeful themselves to wake their readers up" would more fitly define them, for from the beginning to the end of their task—and this, strangely enough, is apt to be the writing of a preface—they must be in that state of mental and spiritual alertness which results from association with the very best of company. There was indeed in my earlier days no surer way to fulfill the old injunction to frequent the society of superior persons than to undertake the writing of a biography. This is no longer so true as it once was. The inclusion of superior criminals in the *Dictionary of National Biography* may have




## *A Venture in Remembrance*

heralded a new day, in which Spoon River and the whole seamy-sided practice of debunking have come into their own. This has been a natural reaction against the filio-pietistic school, in which many biographies were little more than amplified epitaphs—of the flattering sort to which Spoon River presented a conspicuous exception. The revolt against biographies of this old order, and the parallel revolt against reticence of every kind, must have been at work in the mind of Heywood Broun when he declared, about ten years ago, “Only a cad can write a first-class biography.” To this opinion I cannot subscribe, and I shall go on believing that others than cads can write first-class biographies—particularly when they steer clear of second- and third-class subjects. As many tombstones as you please, but not too many biographies—witness the lines of Andrew Lang:—

For now the dentist cannot die  
And leave his forceps as of old,  
But round him, ere he scarce be cold,  
Begins the vast biography.

*Bypaths of Friendship*


 WHILE I was becoming a Bostonian and beginning to acquire the experience in biography on which the foregoing reflections are based, there were bypaths, down which I am tempted to turn a retrospective eye. This falls upon nothing brighter than a number of friendships having their origin more often than not in the Tavern Club. Outside its happy precincts my paths crossed with Gamaliel Bradford's, through his becoming a regular contributor of unsigned editorials to the *Youth's Companion*. Of these little papers, touching a wide range of general topics, he thought well enough himself to consider seriously turning them into a book of miniature essays—a project which never came to fulfillment. For me the friendship which grew out of this early association with a distant cousin of my wife's, whom she had never met till I brought them together, enriched me greatly for some twenty-five years before Bradford's death in 1932. At first, while his limited strength per-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

mitted some physical exercise, he took me canoeing with him several times on the Charles River. It was not until I read his published journals many years later that I realized how much more intently and profitably than I he was observing all that met our eyes on the banks and waters. Cut off by illness from much society, he loved to talk of the world of action and art, to which he could repair for such diverse enjoyment as he found in professional baseball and symphony concerts. We had other places of meeting than his canoe and fireside, especially the monthly dinners of the Examiner Club—of which his father and my father-in-law had been early members—and, later, the Saturday Club, and the weekly meetings of the Library Committee of the Athenæum Trustees. In his journals I was yet to read of the distress that assailed him immediately after many of these gatherings—on the pathetic score that he had said something which must have given offense to somebody. Never, in fact, was there a more gently considerate soul, condemned to the tortures of his own sensitive spirit—and never a more sympathetic friend, generous enough to talk freely, at need, of his own concerns, but still more generously entering

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

into the interests of a friend. Fortified by the wisdom and devotion of the wife to whom he was joined in a perfect marriage, he fought the long battle between weakness of body and strength of spirit to a triumphant close. The element of hidden granite in New England character has seldom won a more notable victory.

It was through the Tavern Club that I first came to know another good, but quite dissimilar, friend, Winthrop Ames. In this club, between his undergraduate experience of Hasty Pudding Club theatricals in Cambridge and his professional beginnings as manager of the Castle Square Theater in Boston, he put his talent for the stage to lively uses. Before and ever since Ames was Secretary of the Club, it has always applied itself with some seriousness to the production of plays, usually written by members. Under the management of Winthrop Ames the prologue preceding and the play following the Christmas dinner took on a beauty and distinction which have always seemed to those of us who had anything to do with them vivid foreshadowings of what our gifted and fascinating friend was yet to contribute to the New York theater. His later success excited no

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

vestige of surprise in the Tavern Club, even in its most stage-minded member, George Pierce Baker, then of Harvard, later of Yale.

A few of us who used to outstay the rest of the company at Tavern Club dinners acquired a name of Ames's coinage—the Aurora Club. This little band came to have dinners of its own, and one of them I recall especially by reason of my reluctant absence from it. Shortly before the dinner hour I had to send word that a sudden attack of laryngitis must keep me at home. Late in my unexciting evening in Brimmer Street, my doorbell rang. Answering its summons, I found on the doorstep a messenger bearing a large lemon bedecked with bright ribbons. The boy announced that it had been sent to me from the Tavern Club, adding that he had just made a mistake in ringing the bell of the house next door. A large man had opened it, he said, and had expressed surprise and indignation at the offer of such a tribute so late at night. "That," he declared with scorn, "must be meant for Mr. Howe, at Number 26." Of course the ironic gift had sprung from the imagination of Winthrop Ames, who would have taken vastly more pleasure in his idea if he could only have known in advance

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

that the lemon would be offered first to my neighbor, the Reverend Father Van Allen, Rector of the Church of the Advent. I have always been reconciled to missing that particular dinner. Before long I had to get used to missing Winthrop Ames himself. An occasional meeting in New York, rewarding as it always was, did not begin to compensate one for his quitting Boston, where, to be sure, there is no blinking the fact that he could never have made the career he achieved in New York.

He was not a member of the Tavern Club when I made my timid entrance to it, much impressed by the figures that met for lunch and dinner at its round table. Reverend seniors they seemed to me, though few of them could have got beyond forty—Robert Grant, Barrett Wendell, Russell Sullivan, a number of doctors in the apostolic succession in which Harvey Cushing and Hans Zinsser were to take their later places, about an equal number of architects, soon to be joined by that best of friends, Henry Forbes Bigelow, the Adamowski brothers and other musicians, Gaugengigl and other painters. I thought them an extraordinary galaxy, and in all their number none seemed more extraordinary than Richard Hodgson, the voluble,

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

warm-hearted Australian-English bachelor who had exposed Mme. Blavatzky in India, and then, as the American representative of the English Society of Psychical Research, was holding and reporting those sessions with the spiritistic medium, Mrs. Piper, with which Boston was for the moment agog. The Tavern Club was a center for the resulting talk, *pro* and *con*—as it became also of the controversy which ended so unhappily for Boston in the lodgment of Macmonnies' "Bacchante" in Brooklyn instead of in the courtyard of the new Public Library on Copley Square. I wish I could record the rallying of all the more influential members of the Club to the only sensible side of that tempestuous issue in the Boston teapot. Where Hodgson stood in this matter I do not remember, but I am sure he held a positive opinion and expressed it emphatically. Vigor in all things was his distinctive quality. In summer he was addicted to long swims, in winter to the game of handball. Playing it one December afternoon of 1905 at the Union Boat Club, ignoring as usual the intimations of an ailing heart, he dropped dead. The Tavern Club had been so much his home that its officers—the nearest counterpart in America to a family of

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

his own—decided to hold his funeral in the upper room of the Club, where he had himself enjoyed the blessing of so much pleasure, both given and received. The rector of a neighboring Episcopal church read the service, members of the Club sang, as a sort of requiem, the club song, "*Meum est propositum in taberna mori.*" It was a masculine farewell to the manliest of men—a service which no participant in it could ever forget.

Nor was this to be the last of Richard Hodgson for me. At the annual meeting of the Tavern Club in May, brief memoirs of members who have died during the past year are read. It fell to me to write the memoir of Hodgson. The Club had it printed as a small pamphlet, which, to my surprise, made its way further into print in the pages of an American Journal of Psychical Research. I had written admiringly of the sincerity of Hodgson's belief in communications from the spirit—a belief, indeed, so sincere that an intelligent man's holding of it could not fail to impress an observer. An amazing result of my recognition of this honesty of Hodgson's was to find myself hailed as a fellow believer. One of the letters which my pamphlet called forth came from a disciple of psychical re-



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

search who had written a novel avowedly dictated by Hodgson's spirit, describing in detail the new life to which he was habituating himself. This too had the ring of sincerity, and, at the author's request, I brought the manuscript to the attention of a Boston publisher, who came within an ace of bringing out the book. The fact that it did appear later under good auspices testified to its merit.

There was one letter from a member of the Tavern Club, William James, which I valued more than anything else my memoir evoked. The large portion of it which follows illustrates so clearly the grace with which William James was wont to express himself, and so significantly his feeling about Hodgson and Mrs. Piper's reports of him, that it should not be condemned to life imprisonment in the limbo of manuscript:—

*95 Irving Street  
Cambridge  
July 14, 1906*

My dear Howe—for your words about our common friend melt out the “Mister”—I have just read your memoir of R.H., and the tears have been in my eyes. . . . The resultant picture quickens all one's memories of the incomparable and

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

unconquerable Richard. Such independence of life with such absence of *defiance* was most rare.

I have been comparing the various utterances of the professed R.H. through Mrs. Piper since he appeared there. Dramatically most like, but in content most imperfect, and on the whole to me very puzzling.

I bless you for the Memoir and for doing it so well.

Faithfully yours,

WM. JAMES

The faculty of saying little things, like "melt out the 'Mister,' " neatly and well, is a gift of the gods; and it was bestowed with special favor on William James and his brother Henry. When I try to recall my encounters, not frequent or intimate, with either of them, I wish more than ever that I had kept some sort of a journal through life, and were not obliged to trust, so largely as I must in all this writing, to a leaky memory. Fortunately a few items remain in that receptacle. I should be sorry to have forgotten, for example, one veriest trifle that fell from the lips of William James. It was on shipboard in the spring of 1905, when Bentley Warren had made me his fortunate companion in a two-weeks journey to the Azores and

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

back. One night before turning in, he and I were having some beer and sandwiches together in the smoking-room, when William James, a fellow passenger, bound for Italy, strolled by. Would he not join us? we asked; and out of all the remembrances of a happy fortnight none is clearer than his reply: "The sight of your potations relaxes my moral fiber." Here was an admirable formula for concession.

When Henry James was in Cambridge a little later, making ready, in his rôle of "restless analyst," to write *The American Scene*, surely one of the most illuminating and characteristic of his books, he used to lunch often at the Tavern Club. There and at several dinner tables, including my own, to which he came for an evening of talk about Charles Eliot Norton, in the preparing of whose *Letters* for publication I was bearing a part at the time, I learned how true was all that has been said by more intimate observers about the warmth of his human and friendly qualities. There could be nothing formidable in one who could part as we did one night after a particularly sumptuous dinner in the house of an older friend of his. As we were putting on our coats downstairs, I remember his

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

saying, with great solemnity and deliberation, "I have not so yielded myself to the pleasures of the table for years and years," and proceeding, in tones of increasingly tragic import: "This is all very well—among friends—with lights—and talk, but think of waking in the middle of the night—and facing this dinner—alone!"

I wish I might have gone away with him from another dinner—with Mrs. Fields and Miss Jewett in Charles Street—at which Julia Ward Howe rose between two high candles on the table and recited "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." He would have said something to make a memorable scene more memorable—as indeed he did, in a letter to Miss Jewett which she showed to me. It was after lunch on another day that I walked with Henry James in the Public Garden, where he made one remark that might well become a local classic. We were standing in the Garden opposite the foot of Marlborough Street, that most respectable of Boston thoroughfares, down which he gazed before asking, in his deep deliberacy of speech, "Do you feel that Marlborough Street [a pause] is precisely [a longer pause] *passionate?*"

When I begin to think of friends in these middle

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

years who were no more known to fame than I, it is with a mixture of gratitude and humility. They were encountered in the fields of both work and play, in connection with editorial duties and in hours of relaxation, and if I had signed a promissory note for all the enjoyment I had in their company I should never have discharged it. Nor shall I try to enumerate these friends here: it would be easy enough to begin, but I should not know where to stop. One of them, however, bears such a special relation to a special pleasure—my inborn love of the sea—that his name cannot be spared from this chronicle. The Tavern Club used to celebrate in the summer what it called its “Fête Maritime.” A few members owning yachts would ask the rest of us to Marblehead for a day on the water, followed by a dinner at the Eastern Yacht Club. Charles K. Cummings was one of the hospitable yachtsmen, and it was on these occasions, I believe, that I first came to realize what an admirable mariner and maritime host he was. This knowledge became clearer and clearer, for in nearly every summer between 1907 and 1916 he asked me to join him in a cruise on his yacht—first a small sloop, then a larger, and finally the Herreshoff *Avenger* of fifty-

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

three water-line feet. There were seldom more than three of us on his boat, and the constant third was Holker Abbott, the beloved secretary—and mainspring—of the Tavern Club for many years. He made no pretense of being a sailor, and no changes in the dark clothes, starched collar, and stiff straw hat in which he had come aboard and was ready at any moment after we came to anchor to step ashore. His fingers seemed never to itch, as mine kept doing, for a grip on sheet, halyard, or wheel. More to the immediate purpose he was the most agreeable, genial, and considerate of companions, and shared to the full in my appreciation of our host's ideal treatment of his guests, and his crew. We sailed with him up the Maine coast, to Mount Desert and beyond, and westward to Newport and Long Island Sound. Of all the holidays on which I can look back there are none so aglow with friendship, the exhilaration of outdoors, the sense of physical well-being—never more soothing than when one rolls into a bunk at night and falls asleep to the murmur of ripples along the hull, at rest in a quiet harbor after a plunging day at sea. Cummings used to ask for contributions to his log-books, and several of mine took form in

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

verse. One of these productions was printed in *Scribner's* under the title "Cruising in August," with pretty pictures in color but quite untrue to the spirit of my rhymes in that young women were among the figures represented. We should have objected strongly to anything of the sort in these purely masculine cruises. The freedom of the seas encouraged our early, trunkless swims, even in the icy waters of the harbors of Maine. One year I celebrated them in rhymes, "On Board the Avenger":

Oh Maine, how few there be that heed  
Thy state of prohibition:—  
Thy laws against the thirsting need  
Seem faint with inanition.

But if thy grave Augustan sires  
Would interdict cold water,  
Our zeal would burn with quenchless fires  
To do the things "we'd oughter."

Not that I think the inward use  
Of water wrong—in crises:  
Only I seek a fair excuse  
From swims in water-ices;

## *Bypaths of Friendship*

For when the order of the bath  
Begins the day's bright story,  
I fain would find an easier path  
To cleanliness—and glory.

Your ballads make—or long or short—  
If I one law may order:  
To pipe and steam-heat every port  
On Maine's indented border.

I lift me shivering from the floe,  
And, warmed by ardent friction,  
Win less from that than from the glow  
Of Cummings' benediction.

So for this life or less and more  
I'd mix a tonic potion;  
Two parts of friendly Commodore  
To one of frigid ocean.


On the last of these cruises, in 1916, we sailed into Bar Harbor to find what seemed, in that limited roadstead, the gigantic hulk of the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*, lying at anchor. For several days we had seen no newspapers, and of course the radio was not yet making a newsroom of every boat's cabin. We soon learned that the German



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

liner had put into the nearest American refuge to save her cargo of gold, and to be interned. What we saw at the moment was a row of round red faces of German sailors fishing out of the round black portholes. We did not foresee that Captain Cummings of the *Avenger* would soon validate his seamanship by becoming Lieutenant Cummings, of the United States Navy, communication officer of the transport *Mount Vernon*, when she was struck by a German torpedo. Still less did we realize that the end of an era had come.

*Unrepentant Liberal*


 HERE IS a saying that if a man is not a radical in early life there is something the matter with his heart, and that if he is not a conservative later on there is something the matter with his head. If this be true, there must have been something the matter with my heart at first, for I certainly was not then a radical. Such conservatism as I possessed has grown steadily less—and this may not speak well for my head. Be that as it may, let me remark with regard to the two words “Unrepentant Liberal,” with which I head this chapter, that I have no reservations about the first. Indeed I glory in having parted company with the more cautious views of my early years. As for “Liberal,” it is a word which no sensible man can apply to himself without misgivings. It is simply too bad that no other word in common use represents the general state of mind which “liberal” imports. When the Unitarian controversy of more than a hundred years ago split the old New Eng-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

land Congregationalism in two, and the new dissidents from dissent took to themselves the name of "Liberal Christians," the "Orthodox" brethren objected seriously. No wonder, for the illiberality of "liberals"—intolerant, after a "holier-than-thou" fashion, of all who do not accept their definition of liberalism—is notoriously irritating. With due repentance, then, for applying the disputed term to myself, the word "liberal," in lieu of a better, must stand at the head of this chapter. Whatever reproach it may invite, I must accept. Though the word itself is sadly out of fashion, the thing for which it stands is permanent.

It is not long since a member of the younger generation confronted me with a challenge which I could not ignore: it was to give some proof that an avowed "liberal" of former years holds to his faith, and, clinging to the essence of it, is in sympathy today with those who wish to see a better social order in the world, and wish it strongly enough to risk some of the chances of change. The more adventurous spirits holding such beliefs are found less frequently among my contemporaries than in the ranks of youth and of those on the sunnier side of middle age. Is it possible for one

## *Unrepentant Liberal*

of their elders to be counted among them? I hope, and believe, it is. How then did an old-fashioned liberal become what he was and is, and where does he stand with respect to the movements of recent years and the present day which go by the name of "progressive"?

In the light of later years, it is humiliating to confess to a young voter's failure to seize his first opportunity to vote in 1888 for Grover Cleveland. The restraints of powerful early influences are not always thrown off with the first sensations of revolt against them. On the other hand it is comforting to remember that when many of those who had helped to place Theodore Roosevelt in the presidency were bitterly resenting his attempts to expose and curb the selfishness of highly respectable circles, and to translate the words of "muckraking" writers into action, I was with those who regarded him as a valiant champion of a new order, entitled thereafter to grateful remembrance in spite of later courses one would much rather forget. From thirty-five to thirty years ago, the liberal who believed that Theodore Roosevelt should be supported because he was facing in the right direction had often to fight for his belief.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

To cite the names of Cleveland and Roosevelt is not to magnify politics in terms of personality, but merely to recall the drifts and tendencies with which I was beginning to feel a strong sympathy. What must have been the crowning grief of Roosevelt's life—that he brought about the election of Woodrow Wilson—was rather a comfort than a grief to many others. Over and above the murk and clamor of party politics, the acceptance of Roosevelt's general point of view in national affairs undoubtedly prepared many minds for an even fuller acceptance of Wilson's. When half-gods go, the gods arrive. In the very nature of the presidential campaign of 1912 the Republican Party had nothing but half-gods to offer. For one I found it invigorating to vote, for the first time in a national election since Cleveland won his second term in 1892, as an emancipated Independent, for Woodrow Wilson. What his liberalism, more robust than Roosevelt's, would have accomplished in domestic affairs, had not the war changed every current, must be a matter of surmise. It is certain, however, that in national as in international matters he embodied a spirit of true liberalism—so to define the spirit of an honest

## *Unrepentant Liberal*

belief in the equalizing of opportunity for the many and the few. Of course he made his mistakes, as every fallible human being must. But the tragedy of reaction from ideals which the world was not ready to accept still seems to those who believed in him to have wrought consequences of appalling and continued harm.

At the convention which nominated Harding in 1920 the reaction against Wilson took a minor form which impressed me as comic at the time. Fearing to trust to memory for words heard more than twenty years ago, I have turned recently to the official account of that convention—and there the words are, just as they fell upon my ears in Chicago. They occur at the end of the speech in which an Illinois Congressman, William A. Rodenberg, placed the name of Governor Frank O. Lowden in nomination. This was the crowning encomium bestowed upon his candidate: "A man of visions but not a visionary, a man of ideals but not an idealist!" I wondered at the time what was the matter with an idealist except that the term had been applied, perhaps too frequently, to Wilson. Instead of the "man of ideals but not an idealist," the convention chose Harding, who did

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

not convince a lenient world that he was either an idealist or a man of ideals, at least of the kind that call for praise in party conventions. On the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*, he may even have served to thrust the despised idealist back into the light of public favor. He left to his party, however, a legacy of penance which his successors in office could not completely pay in the ten years of their effort to do so.

By 1932 the "old liberal" was old indeed. Then began the period out of which sprang the challenge already mentioned. Does a surviving Wilsonian liberal now find it as hard as the dove of old to alight on any spot of firm ground? Two conspicuous elevations attract his searching eye, one on his extreme right, the other on his extreme left. Truth to tell, he finds little to choose between them. He would find himself ill at ease with those reactionaries of the right who talk as if they would like to return to the pre-crash days of the "Coolidge market," when they were happy as moths in a fool's little paradise lighted by the flame into which they could not help flying at last. The trouble with these backward-gazers, who include some of my best friends, is that, deploring with their lips the

## *Unrepentant Liberal*

change which the whole world has undergone, they do not in their hearts accept that change as a fact. Nor do they seem to realize that the alternative to accepting it is to be dragged screaming some day into the recognition of it.

Then one looks to the extreme left. What appears there? Not merely the indications of a changed world; but every sign of variegated effort to change it more thoroughly still — to substitute, for the basis and sanctions on which our Western civilization, with all its shortcomings, has been erected, an entirely new set of standards and objectives. At the core of them lies the suppression of the individual's right and duty to think for himself, the disappearance of that intellectual and spiritual freedom which has been counted the richest possession of democracies and of the men and women who constitute them. The prospect is not alluring.

There is the further dilemma that if one even looks in either of the two directions, there are derisive cries from one side that he is a Fascist, from the other that he is a Communist. *Charlatan pour charlatan*, I suspect that the second, when one knows in reality that he is not a Communist,



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

is the epithet to be preferred; it is bestowed so freely, and so falsely, upon many of the finest spirits of our time that one might well be proud to join their companionship.

Where, then, may the stranded liberal of former days plant his foot? Well—there is a wide territory between the two extremes. Its general characteristics have been defined since 1900 as those of “the Square Deal,” “the New Freedom,” and “the New Deal.” Each of these terms calls to mind the personality of a single leader, representing in himself a general body of principles, a general plan of approach to the problems of a world that has been changing with steadily increasing rapidity. There have been many divergences in the details of that approach, but when the London *Economist* several years ago described the President Roosevelt of our own day as one who has been making the wrong answers to some questions, but has been asking the right questions, it suggested a pattern into which all three of them can be fitted with a reasonable measure of accuracy.

This stranded liberal looks back over the years and recalls certain reservations with respect to earlier leaders and some of the followers with

## *Unrepentant Liberal*


whom he was counted. He can remember, moreover, the rise and fall of other opinions than his own. There was the instance, for example, of Secretary Baker, despised in wartime by an influential portion of the community, and rarely mentioned by so respectable a journal as the *Boston Evening Transcript* without the scornful definition, "our pacifist Secretary of War." When the war was over his work in Washington came by common consent to be counted supremely good. From such examples one learns not to take any contemporaneous dispraise too seriously. The general direction in which a leader and his followers are facing is the important thing. Neither he nor they can rise so far above the level of mankind as to realize every hope of their admirers. One did not find perfection in either the men or the measures that enlisted sympathy and support when the century was younger. Nor can it be counted upon today. What can be expected, and demanded, is the realization of new occasions and the new duties they teach, together with some assurance that these duties will be fulfilled.

Between the right and the left there is always the center, and the regions close to it on either

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

side. It is in the nearer leftward portion of that territory that the old-fashioned liberal may expect to find himself at home. If he be ambitious for political office, he may be forced to quit this region for one of those outlying districts in which it is possible to attract more attention. For most of us this is, fortunately, not essential. Meanwhile our suffrages can often be turned to account for candidates whose general point of view coincides with our own; and the politicians may realize some day that our numerical strength is greater than they have appeared to think it. When there is not an ideal candidate to support, there is usually one to be voted against with entire satisfaction. The candidate and the vote, however, are recurrent vehicles for the expression of a continuing state of mind. It is in that important particular that the past and the present may be happily united.

*Wartime Editor*

ALTHOUGH most of the foregoing reflections were put on paper some months before the outbreak of the Second World War, they may stand as the expression of a state of mind which came gradually into being and survives the cataclysm of 1939–1941. A variety of circumstances contributed to its formation. I cannot help placing high among them the generally liberating influence of my wife's mind and spirit, but the outward circumstances were those which I should like especially to recall. None of these was more important than my quitting, on the verge of fifty, what seemed a permanent connection with the *Youth's Companion*, to become editor of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, at a smaller salary, for what was supposed to be a "half-time job" but was soon to become much more. This change, in 1913, would, I suspect, have been harder to make but from my having recently made a general assertion of independence through voting, with an en-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

thusiasm then fresh and unfamiliar, for Woodrow Wilson. In itself this was unimportant enough, but it had the significance of a symbol, not relating by any means to myself alone but to a general awakening of a new spirit in Americans, a new realization that in the political life from which no responsible citizen could escape there was something much more vital than mere politics. Of course this spirit had always existed, but I do believe that Wilson himself contributed immeasurably to its spread, and I take a certain pleasure in having discovered that at the end of my forties I was still young enough to respond to it.

For more than five years the editorship of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* was my chief concern. The outbreak of war in Europe doubled or trebled the responsibility of this work. The life of American colleges and universities underwent a sudden and violent change. The function of an alumni journal was to keep the graduates of the university in an intelligent and, if possible, sympathetic relation with the conduct of its affairs. It was desirable for the editor of the journal to know what was really going on, sometimes even before it happened. In a time of national crisis, when every

## *Wartime Editor*

educational and administrative step of such an institution as Harvard was under the critical scrutiny of the public, this was peculiarly desirable. It had been my good fortune to maintain with President Lowell the personal relation that began when he wrote the first article for my first issue of the *Harvard Monthly*. This had grown closer through my becoming, shortly before I left the *Youth's Companion*, a summer resident of Cotuit on Cape Cod, a lifelong resort of Mr. Lowell and other members of his family. The place was not merely a stronghold of a few Bostonians whose forbears had acquired considerable tracts of its shore lands in the 1840's and 1850's. It was also a sort of Harvard summer capital, for, besides the President of the University, there were among the occupants of summer cottages such colleagues and kinsmen of his as Channing, Taussig, and Ropes from the College, and J. J. Putnam and Algernon Coolidge from the Medical School. Ideal as the waters of Cotuit were for the nurture of oysters, they lent themselves no less to the initiation of one's own young into the lifelong pleasures of swimming and sailing. The simplicity and friendliness of the summer neighbors, both "city folk" and "native,"

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

added graces of their own to the yet unspoiled "Cape," and for more than twenty years our house at "Little River" was a nucleus of family happiness never to be forgotten.

For me an attic room in the tiny toolhouse and garage close to the water's edge was a perfect workshop. It was there that I forged into an editorial for a September 19 issue of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, the first after the outbreak of the European war, a portion of a letter from William Roscoe Thayer, after getting his consent to use it editorially rather than as correspondence. In view of the fact that Thayer was soon to become one of the least neutral of Americans, his words, like the later declaration of Theodore Roosevelt that the invasion of Belgium was no concern of ours, provide a striking reminder that the stresses of wartime play havoc with the consistencies of men. The essence of the matter was Thayer's plea that Harvard should become a great oasis of neutrality through the conflict that lay ahead. The details of the episode are related in the memoir of Thayer which, in response to my own invitation as editor of *Later Years of the Saturday Club*, I contributed to that volume. It is as true with writing men,

## Wartime Editor

excited whether in 1914 or in 1941 by the issues of a world war, as it is with the fighting men of whom Shakespeare wrote:—

We may as bootless spend our vain command  
Upon the enraged soldiers in their spoil  
As send precepts to the leviathan  
To come ashore.

As editor of the *Bulletin* in wartime I had my own lessons to learn, and learned one of them somewhat painfully. It was a melancholy function of that journal to record the deaths among those many sons of Harvard who took part in the war. A year after the United States entered the struggle, the *Bulletin* printed, on April 4, 1918, a list of the fifty-eight Harvard men who had died, up to that time, in active or auxiliary service. It seemed natural to me to head this list "The Harvard Roll of Honor." This I did without giving due, if indeed any, consideration to the fact that the list contained two German names. They were those of graduate students at Harvard before the war, who fell in the German Army in the autumn of 1914, long before the United States joined the Allies. This made no matter. An outraged graduate broke forth at once with a letter of protest against



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

“the besmirching of our Roll of Honor. . . . If,” he went on, “a record is to be kept of the services of our enemies, I hope that their names may be segregated for that purpose in a pen by themselves, but not as a padding to what should be called a Harvard Roll of Honor.”

Such an outburst was entirely typical of the spirit of the time, in American circles of large influence. I am afraid it was this spirit which, operating as it did at Versailles and in Europe through the past two decades, contributed, with our own desertion of the League of Nations, to the present chaos of the world. At the moment I printed the wrathful letter with all possible promptness, over an editorial note of regret for the offense unintentionally given. This calmed the immediate little tempest. As time went on, the *Bulletin's* columns of correspondence were filled with angry discussions preceding the erection of a Harvard War Memorial. The suggestion of a church seemed a summons not to peace but a sword. At length the idea of a chapel prevailed, and, under the modest and untiring leadership of Allston Burr, the large fund required for its building was raised. His college classmate, John D. Merrill, my associate

## *Wartime Editor*

and successor in the editorship of the *Bulletin*, was responsible for so much of whatever merit the journal possessed during my conduct of it that another word of gratitude to another friend must be spoken. Alas that the faithful and selfless John Merrill has passed beyond the hearing of it!

My direction of the *Bulletin* may have been too temperate in a period of passion. It was, however, not this, I suspect, but my avowed admiration for President Wilson's leadership of national affairs that brought me, as I could not help feeling, under a ban of sharp disapproval in quarters which I had hitherto regarded as friendly. I wonder if it was so all over America. Certainly in Boston it was then, as it has sometimes been since, easy to fall under a certain odium, not wholly unenjoyable, on the simple terms of differing in opinion from the majority of one's own circle. Fortunately I could always find a little amusement in the beautiful certitude of conservative friends that the truth and the whole truth was lodged in their point of view. When prohibition came, they may have been right in feeling that the best way to get rid of an obnoxious law was to break it and thus contribute to its utter discrediting. I may have been wrong

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

in placing my distaste for dealing with bootleggers above my relish for their wares, and consequently forgoing for a time some of the minor and major social pleasures in which alcohol plays its part. There were those who respected this position, but more, I think, who regarded me as mildly insane for taking it. A temporary "dry" was more tolerable, however, than a permanent Wilsonian, and it was in this character that, during or shortly after the so-called "Great War," I found myself labeled as "tainted."

The disquieting truth was broken to me by a sympathetic friend, a fellow-member of the Club which had become my second home. He told me that on coming to lunch one day he found another member seated downstairs, and asked if he was not going up to lunch. "No," was the answer; "I started for it, and saw there was only one vacant seat at the table. That was next to Mark Howe—and he's tainted." I am glad I did not ask who the hunger-striker was, and even now know only that he is no longer living. It has been hard, however, to bury the thought of "tainted." There was plenty of "tainted money" in the spacious times of muckraking, but the coin of any sort which a

## Wartime Editor

moral *croupier* could gather from my out-turned pockets could not have brought me under condemnation on that score. If there were taints of disease or inheritances they had hidden themselves even from their victim. Only tainted thought remained.

Of what did this taint consist? It must have been my firm belief in the underlying and all-embracing purpose for which our country had declared itself in 1917, and a continued conviction that, in spite of gropings and stumblings in high places, the general furtherance of this purpose was much to be preferred to its frustration. Even with this feeling I have never quite got over being sorry for the man who missed his lunch on my account.

Such a personal and local episode is worth recording only as an illustration of a spirit with which many so-called "liberals" of twenty years ago had to cope. Was it an undue concession to that spirit which determined the title of the *Memoirs of the Harvard Dead in the War against Germany*, an undertaking which grew out of my connection with the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, and, in terms of space on the shelves of my own books, proved the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

largest to which I have set my hand? The unhappy experience with the "Roll of Honor" made for caution in the plans for this undertaking. How was it to be defined? The long title, limiting the memoirs to those who had died in "the War against Germany," solved (by elimination) the question of dealing with the Germans, of whom three, out of the four now identified, were then known. Had I realized, when I was asked some months before the end of the war to undertake this task, that 373 separate memoirs would finally have to be forthcoming, my zeal to do this something in a cause for which otherwise I could do so little might have been tempered. The three Germans must have been on my mind through it all, for in the Preface to the fifth and last volume of the series, I introduced, as a matter of historical record, their names, their Harvard status, and the dates of their deaths. In the Harvard Memorial Church they are also commemorated—again, as I think, with propriety—in a place and manner separating them from those who died in "the War against Germany." It is conceivable that posterity will regard this course as narrow-minded. At the time any other course would have provoked

## *Wartime Editor*

consequences that would have been unhappy out of all proportion to their cause.


Let me hasten to say that the 373 memoirs did not all proceed from my own pen. The first three volumes of the *Memoirs* contained 156 of them, enriched, in a few instances, by long quotations from authoritative sources, but fairly attributable to me. If the series was to be completed in any reasonable time, it had become evident that I could not achieve it singlehanded. Accordingly I turned to others, usually with special qualifications for dealing with special subjects. Of these six collaborators, of whom Frederick L. Allen was one, Arthur Stanwood Pier made the largest number of contributions. From these admirable helpers came 139 memoirs in all. The 78 for which I was responsible in Volumes IV and V brought the total of my contributions to 234.

All this sounds formidably like a matter of mass production. On the contrary—and I doubt not that my collaborators would bear me out in this—each memoir presented itself as a separate, and often deeply moving, problem. The families and friends of all the subjects were most coöperative in providing diaries, letters, and other memorabilia

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

of the young men they had loved. They came from all walks of society: some with every supposed advantage; others—like the Jewish freshman private who had wanted to become a rabbi and wrote letters in the vein of the Old Testament prophets—from origins that seemed less favored. The memoirs revealed them, as accurately as possible, on their own terms, and, relatively thankless as the huge task sometimes seemed, I still feel that these books, owing most to the material so generously placed at my command, bear imperishable testimony to the spirit of the youth of America in the Great War. The fact of the matter is that youth, as a theme for biography, is all too often youth that has laid down life itself for something in which it believes. The bitter fear that the object for which it gave all it had to give may be defeated at the hands of wary age never assailed it. There was only the generous giving, only the flame of a burning desire to right a monstrous wrong, to have done with a repulsive business, to take up life again in a decent world. This was how one felt in the nineteen-twenties. What have the forties in store for us?

*Books, Institutions, and Persons*


 SINCE my *Bulletin* duties were supposed to claim only a part of my time, there were of course other things to do. One of these opened the door to a long and happy association—with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It was at first merely a personal association, with its “founder and sustainer” Henry Lee Higginson, then in the midst of his long presidency of the Tavern Club. In this capacity I had come to admire and respect him greatly, and in his blunt, affectionate way he had let me feel myself one of his younger friends. It was in 1913, at a children’s party for the singing of Christmas carols at the top of a house in Acorn Street, that he called me into a corner and suggested my writing a history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, then in the thirty-third year of its existence. Both my tastes and my needs prompted an immediate seizure of the opportunity. I could lay no claim to competence in music, beyond a certain knack at accompaniments by ear on the piano. This



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

led George Chadwick one night at the Tavern Club to remark while, shameless in his presence, I was keeping some singers together—perhaps in a Gilbert and Sullivan chorus—"Well, you know your way round in the key of G!" But I had delighted for years in our Symphony Concerts—as I have come to delight also in the Bach Festivals at the Bethlehem of my college days—and I proceeded to write about the Orchestra on the terms set forth, when the writing was done, in the Preface: "This book is not the work of a musical critic, but of an editor and annalist." At the fiftieth anniversary of the Orchestra, in 1931, a new edition of the book was published. Revised and extended in collaboration with John N. Burk, now widely known both for the historical and descriptive notes which he contributes to the program books of the Boston Orchestra and for his biography of Clara Schumann, it contained a new Preface and an "Interlude" of my own writing. In the first I told of Mr. Higginson's despair for the Orchestra's survival of the outbreak of war in Europe in August, 1914, when I informed him that my book was finished. "By the time this book can be published," he exclaimed, "there may not be an Orchestra to

### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

write about." Yet published it was, on his eightieth birthday, November 18, 1914. In the "Interlude" I related the whole unhappy episode which brought Karl Muck's conductorship to its close. The record of these circumstances is thus so readily accessible that there is no need to repeat it here. I cannot refrain, however, from saying what a satisfaction it has been to serve, through all the years since 1918 when Mr. Higginson turned the responsibility for the Orchestra over to others, as one of the nine Trustees chosen to work under his cousin, Judge Frederick P. Cabot, first President of the Board. Only four of us now remain, in a Board enlarged to twelve. What the Orchestra owed to the leadership of Judge Cabot, in consolidating the Higginson principles into Boston Symphony traditions, I tried to set forth, after Cabot's untimely death, in my brief biography of him, *The Children's Judge*. Devoted as he was to many good works, the cause of Beauty was the cause nearest to his heart. It has been much for one who can do little more than to find his way round in the key of G, to bear any part with him, his colleagues and successors, in the furtherance of this cause, in the special realm of music.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

The *Bulletin* became, as I have suggested, so largely a "war job" that when the war was over the job seemed to be done. It was a liberating experience, and left me with a belief still unshaken that of all employers, direct or indirect, a great university is the most satisfying, and the best academic society is on the whole—to me—the most congenial. You are exerting yourself in a really civilizing cause, and the chief competition you encounter is with others whose value, like your own, is measured by the extent of their contribution to that cause. The rivalries are those of the mind and spirit, not of the pocket and the market place. They tell me this is not the case in all academic circles. Perhaps—I can speak only whereof I know.

What about the publishing business? At least in the office of an editor, is there not something of the same spirit? Something, yes, but in the commercial nature of the case, none too much. In the spring of every year I am visited by college seniors seeking advice about employment in a magazine or book publishing office. They are bent on pursuing literature, they tell me, and recoil from the fate of the young bond salesman. (*Recoiled*, I should

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

have said, for that fate is now more restricted, either by desire or by opportunity, than it once was.) Again and again I have told them that if they have the talent and will to become writers they will do it, and that the publishing business, for the beginner, has just about as close a relation to literature as the shoe business. I remember that Herbert Small, of the long defunct firm for which I edited the "Beacon Biographies," used to say that he persisted resolutely in the reading of literature—"and by literature," he added, "I mean books not published by Small, Maynard and Company." Some of the youths who consult me about steps to authorship follow my advice—to seek a newspaper job for a year or two and then to leave it, unless by that time they have come to aspire to the higher ranges of journalism. Some of them of course drop anchor at once in the wind-swept harbor of publishing—and some of these, in whom the love of letters is not a mere springtime fancy, ride it out.

Yet the whole business of books, whether written by yourself or by somebody else, has much to recommend it. In the business of publishing, as in every other business, and in nearly every human relationship, one's satisfaction in a daily task de-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

rives largely from one's associates, and from their real place in the scale of human values. I am ready to maintain that the men and women who write books and the men and women who prepare them for public consumption are, by and large, more than commonly a decent lot. This is by no means to say that sharpers and chisellers and self-seekers never climb into the fold, or that every one of them fits the definition of him who "swearth unto his neighbor, and disappointeth him not, even though it were to his own hindrance." The publishers and editors who fall into these categories stand out, in my experience, as exceptions to the general rule. *Crede experto*: as writer, editor, and, for the better part of ten years, publisher, I have seen both the fair surface of the tapestry and the knots behind it.

Early in 1919 I quitted the editorship of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, and as that year was ending sat down at a desk in the office of the Atlantic Monthly Company as editor of the books published by the Atlantic Monthly Press. This was a sort of homecoming. Ever since my brief editorial connection with the *Atlantic* under Horace E. Scudder, its editors Walter H. Page and Bliss Perry—that best of friends and most sympathetic of sponsors for

### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

my offerings in prose and verse—had dealt generously with writings of mine. Ellery Sedgwick had acquired control of the *Atlantic* about ten years before my physical return to the *Atlantic* office, and had asked me to become a director, and then vice president, of his new company. My friendship with him had begun when we were fellow members of the editorial staff of the *Youth's Companion*. In the summer of 1915 we had gone together to the Canadian Rockies, for a camping trip in Jasper Park, and on to "the Coast." It was thus both outside and within his office, for the better part of ten years, that I came to appreciate the personal qualities that made him the remarkable editor he was. If my son Quincy Howe, in his recent book, *The News and How To Understand It*, had been writing about Ellery Sedgwick in the following characterization of a great magazine editor, he could not have pictured him more accurately:—

What is editorial ability? To put it in a nutshell, the great editor must have a limitless range of interest; he must have limitless enthusiasm; and his interests and enthusiasms must anticipate the interests and enthusiasms of the public by the length of time it takes him to get out his publication. If the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

great editor is also a great salesman and a great organizer, well and good, but unless he can anticipate public interest—and that means that he must have wide and strong interests of his own—all the salesmanship in the world will not take him far.

The editor and publisher without such interests and enthusiasms is the one who never gets into trouble—and never gives the public much to think and talk about. Sedgwick constantly did this second thing, most advantageously of all during the World War, when he put the *Atlantic* into a leading place in America as a recorder and interpreter of great events. The publisher of the magazine, MacGregor Jenkins, with whom I had formed a warm friendship in those early nineties when we were serving the magazine together, did not share all of Sedgwick's editorial and business enthusiasms, nor—invariably—did I. There was plenty of excitement in the office through the decade in which I had most to do with it, for Opal Whiteley—a feminine Chatterton?—appeared early on the scene. Later came the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and Felix Frankfurter's article and book about it; still later, the Al Smith campaign, and the spurious Lincoln letters. In the matter of Opal Whiteley, I

### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

have always thought there was more to be said for a qualified belief in that extraordinary young woman and her extraordinary writings than a suspicious public was willing to allow. Enthusiasms must needs pay their penalties. It has been a lasting wonder to me that an editor so addicted to them by nature as Sedgwick, with opportunities and temptations to yield to them so often during an editorship of thirty years, got himself into trouble so infrequently. The brake of common sense worked far more often than nine times out of ten.

Among the many spirited letters of John Jay Chapman which the miserable "exigencies of space" forced me to omit from my book about him there was one, to George Dudley Seymour, containing the following sentences:—"A friend of mine—and quite against my advice—is now [1920] raising Cain with the publishers to reprint my Garrison book from the plates. He's a man of 60. There you are! The only people I know that are good for much are 60. It don't look like a good prospect for the world; for I don't see that we've got *time* to do enough to save it before we are requested to move on."



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

I was myself that friend, though in fact four years short of the sixty Chapman allotted to me. For some years we had had meetings now and then, chiefly at the Tavern Club, and I had come in for some round abuse from him while I was editing the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*. Perhaps my interest in his *William Lloyd Garrison*, which the Atlantic Monthly Press did republish in 1921, redeemed me in his eyes. His earlier writings had won my warm admiration, and now for a few years, in the course of which two small books of his, *A Glance towards Shakespeare* and *Letters and Religion*, were issued from the Atlantic Monthly Press office, it was my special function to keep him on the good terms he had seldom been able to maintain with his publishers. It was too much to expect that this would last, and he drifted away—not, however, from our personal relationship, which grew only the closer. From his unpublished letters I could quote passages of equally fervent praise and censure. The comic spirit might prevail, as in a letter already quoted. More often he was quite serious. When, for example, I published a book about reformers, *Causes and Their Champions*, it was entirely in character for him to de-

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

nounce the book nearly *in toto*, remarking of one of its chapters: "I can't charge you with lack of critical and artistic instinct but only with feeble-mindedness." It was no less in character, when his *Dante* appeared a few months later, to inscribe my copy of it: "Mark Howe—from his deeply affectionate friend, John Jay Chapman." The English girl who nicknamed him early in life "Smiling Tempest" defined him with an aptness which all his friends would have recognized. "Tempest" was the word—you could not associate him with gentle breezes. And "Smiling" was the word, for behind all the commotions he enjoyed creating stood as kindly and beneficent an Æolus as ever breathed. When he died and the task of dealing with him as a biographer fell to me, I could bless the Atlantic Monthly Press for having cemented our friendship, and could proceed with the most exciting piece of work I have ever undertaken. My hope that I could further his speaking and becoming known to more than the relatively few fell somewhat short of fulfillment. He never could appeal to such matter-of-fact citizens as the one who exclaimed, on learning of a lurid episode in his personal history, "Why should I read a book about

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

such a damn fool as that?" Happily the world contains more receptive spirits, and what Chapman has meant to one of them I hope the chapter about him in Edmund Wilson's *Triple Thinkers* will long continue to tell.

There were other friends for whom I was indebted to the *Atlantic* office. Among them was that light of too short a day, Stuart P. Sherman, whom I visited at Urbana, where he showed me the riches of the University of Illinois. I remember one point we had in common. "Do your children care anything for what you write?" he asked. "Not much," I said. "My son," he replied, "can't bear anything of mine." That was twenty years ago.

At about the same time the manuscript of *The Founding of New England*, by James Truslow Adams, fell to me as its first reader in a publishing office. I thought so highly of the manuscript that I put my opinion of it to the test of asking the wise and beloved Worthington C. Ford, then of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and now alas, no more, for his opinion of it. "The best yet" was his verdict. With most of Mr. Adams's books produced in the next ten years, with *The Adams Family* and *The Epic of America* at the end of

### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

that period, I found myself concerned as both editor and friend. More than that, in England I had occasion to see that under his guidance I could learn far more about London than I had ever been able to impart to him about New England.

With Lord Charnwood, whom I had met in Boston independently of books and writing, I should probably have had no further intercourse had he not responded favorably to a suggestion of mine that he would do well to follow his *Abraham Lincoln* with a *Theodore Roosevelt*. This he did, to the enjoyment of many readers who found the book as much to their taste in print as it was to mine in manuscript. I could not bring him to agree with me that a strong expression of his own antipathy to Woodrow Wilson was of no value to his portrait of Roosevelt. Another, and quite different, Wilson-hater, A. Edward Newton, was equally unmoved by my plea to omit a sneer at Wilson, which in fact struck reviewers of the book containing it as an extraneous blot on its pages. "Eddie" Newton hated to yield; but once I saw him do it. He had designed a title page for his ingenious cento, the play *Doctor Johnson*, and insisted that it was superior to a simpler design from

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

the Merrymount Press. He agreed to abide by the decision of artistic friends of his whom we were to meet one day at the Franklin Inn Club of Philadelphia. The verdict went completely against him. "Your design is terrible," they declared with one voice, and it must be said that he accepted his discomfiture with the best possible grace.

There were no such conflicts and showdowns with Lord Charnwood, to whom I owed a number of pleasant experiences in England. One of these is worth recording. As his guest I spent my only night in an English college, his own Balliol, where he spoke to a meeting of the League of Nations Association. We met at Paddington Station one morning, went to Oxford together, and happened to be met in the Porter's Lodge of Balliol by its Master, A. L. Smith. On quitting this entrance, there was a small quadrangle to be crossed. Halfway on the path from one of its corners to another the Master stopped me abruptly. "Look about you," he said; "with the exception of the one electric light bulb you see over there, your eyes meet nothing which was not here before Columbus discovered your country—to the great detriment of mankind." This, I learned later, was his habitual word of welcome

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

to American visitors, whom indeed he liked, even as they liked him.

The sayings remembered best by American travelers frequently proceed from their own countrymen. Out of all such remarks I have treasured especially the words of a compatriot, a unit, silent to the last, in a group shepherded through the cathedral at Bourges. When the group was dissolving, and the guide had brought his talk to a rhapsodic close, my fellow American turned to me with the dictum, in good New Yorkese, "Yes, this is a fine building, but the Pennsylvania Station's got it beat a mile, besides being good for something."

That was in 1925. Another deliverance, consisting of only one word, transmitted by cable, reached me in London. That word, from home, was "PULITZER," and I recognized it as an announcement that my *Barrett Wendell and His Letters* had received the Pulitzer Prize for biography. Shall I not confess that this, and my election a month or two later to the Harvard Board of Overseers, provided me, though for no dangerous length of time, with a mild sense of arrival? Such a sense, I dare say, may be likened, in its effects, to those of another cause, of which I have heard

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

the felicitous Lewis Perry, paying his compliments to a guest of honor at a Tavern Club dinner, declare that flattery does you no harm if you don't inhale it.

On an earlier page I have mentioned the pleasures of a biographer. These began to multiply before, during, and immediately after my close association with the *Atlantic* office. In pursuing them it was necessary to acquire some familiarity with various fields of human activity—politics and diplomacy for George von Lengerke Meyer, historical writing for James Ford Rhodes, reform for Moorfield Storey. If one becomes at all a specialist, it is not in any one of such directions, but in the wider territory of human nature, and the interpretation of its workings under specific conditions. Here is an ample challenge to one's faculties. Against the pleasures involved in meeting it, one offset must be recognized. Unless the biographer is endowed with superhuman endurance and eyesight, he must content himself with reading chiefly in the definite fields of his successive undertakings. This means the neglect of classics with which one would greatly like to renew, or acquire, some familiarity, and also of much contemporary writ-

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

ing. There was a bitter truth behind the old picture in *Punch* of the author who confessed, "No, I don't read books; I write them." Of course it is not quite so bad as that, but it is bad enough. The reading of poetry is all too apt to be crowded out by what Austin Dobson calls "the pains of prose." For the very best current fiction time must somehow be found, if only after one has gone to bed. How else can one fully apprehend the changes that have come to pass in what the world takes for granted? That work of tremendous power, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*,—the book of the moment as I write these words, devoured by hundreds of thousands of young and old within a month or two of its publication,—is a striking case in point. Nothing else has brought so clearly home to me the depth and the breadth of the change in what the reading public accepts as a matter of course. For the few disturbed by the elemental detail of deed and word set down in this book, there are the multitudes who take it all in their stride, without surprise or revulsion. It amused me, in rereading *Persuasion* immediately after this masterpiece of our own day, to find, among the bad habits of a doubtful character, "that Sunday traveling had been a common



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

thing." The virtues and the vices have certainly been measured from age to age on a sliding scale.

Whether one reads or only writes books, the future of reading, for the enjoyment and stimulus of what Woodrow Wilson called "mere literature," seems a precarious future. The rivals of the library lamp have been enumerated again and again. Where that luminary is still in use, its light falls largely on the daily, weekly, and monthly press, and on books bearing on the immediate state of this distracted world. Yet valiant publishers continue to reprint the classics and to augment the steady stream of new books in every field of letters. The bare fact of their constant absorption by the public may answer some fears for the future. The publishers themselves appear undaunted by the steadily diminishing number of feet in private bookshelves, corollary to the steadily increasing number of apartment dwellers. In the libraries, both circulating and cumulative, and, one may hope, in an extending base of real literacy, further answers may be found. Nevertheless, there is plenty of occasion for speculation on the reading habits of the future.

On previous pages I have touched upon my long

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

relations with the Boston Athenæum and a brief experience of the Huntington Library in California. There is a little more to be said about libraries—again with reference to things that are taken for granted. The libraries of the present day are among such things. It was not always so, even in such centers of light—if not always of sweetness—as Boston. In 1814 when George Ticknor was preparing himself there for studies in Germany, he could obtain a German dictionary only through borrowing it in New Hampshire. We are told that Justice Story, who died in 1845, knowing his Boston well, doubted whether in all America there was one library in which Gibbon's references could be verified. As late as 1866 James Russell Lowell complained sharply of the Harvard College Library because there was less of Goethe on its shelves than on his own, and less of Dante than on those of Charles Eliot Norton. There was not a single Shakespeare folio, he said, no Dryden, and no adequate text of Donne. Here was a worker in the field of letters who could not find the implements for his work in the very place where it was most natural to look for them.

Through recent years I have spent more and

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

more time in those treasuries of books which all over America have come to be counted among its true glories. Of librarians and their assistants I must submit the testimony, based on no little experience, that the library and the college or university have much in common, in that their officials deal with a visitor not grudgingly or of necessity but in the spirit of "What can I do for you?"

My greater intimacy with libraries began while I was still involved in *Atlantic* affairs, but was becoming less an editor and more a writer. In 1929, when my active association with the Atlantic Monthly Company came to an end, a piece of good fortune befell me in the form of an invitation from Herbert Putnam, whom I had known first as secretary of the Tavern Club, to come to Washington as one of the staff of "Consultants" he was then assembling in the Library of Congress. There were, I believe, ten of us in that first winter (1929-1930) of the experiment. Retired college professors, experts in various fields, predominated as Consultants in Philosophy, History, Economics, Classics, and so forth.

My own imposing title was "Consultant in Biography." We were all asked to familiarize our-

### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

selves with the Library's collections in our several fields, and, if only by suggestion, to promote their enrichment. A more personal service lay in actual consultations with persons who were working in the Library and wanted, even if they did not need, such advice as they might have received from elder scholars attached to a college or university, had they been working in its library. It was indeed an important element in Putnam's plan for his staff of consultants to impart to the Library of Congress something of the quality of a university library as a focus of scholarship. The other consultants could all qualify much more definitely as scholars than I. Biography, outside of a few adventurous colleges, had not attained the dignity of a subject to be treated in academic courses. There were nevertheless biographies in process of serious construction at the Library during my whole winter and part of the next as a member of its staff, and such counsel as I was able to dispense was at the service of the biographers.

I remember especially a gray-robed sister, on leave of absence from the faculty of a Roman Catholic college for women, who was working on Cardinal Newman, and sought advice—on the

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

assembling and handling of her material. If I had not been of some help to her, I suppose no Christmas cards would have come from her long after our conferences were over. When Tyler Dennett's admirable *John Hay; From Poetry to Politics* appeared in 1933, it was the accident of my association with the Library of Congress to find myself joined in his warmest "Acknowledgments" with J. Franklin Jameson, Charles A. Beard, and Allan Nevins. Beard was living in Washington, Nevins was working in the Library on his life of Cleveland, and Jameson, Chief of the Division of Manuscripts, wisest and kindest of friends and helpers to all who would draw upon his amazing store of historical knowledge, represented at its best the type of scholarly association of which the Library was the center. The daily luncheons at Putnam's "Round Table," with heads of the Library departments, fellow consultants, and eminent visitors from Capitol Hill and all the world besides, broke the routine with agreeable amenities. Altogether the decade of the thirties seemed to open auspiciously.

Of course the Library was but one of Washington's facets. One did not need to seek beyond its

## *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

walls for good music, but a new symphony orchestra was forming in the city, pictures were to be seen, agreeable society abounded—how friendly the “cave-dwellers” were to my wife and me in the homelike little house we occupied!—and everywhere government, government, government dominated the scene. I wonder if American experience can be complete without a winter or two of Washington life. When you quit the place you are assured that nobody is missed—and nobody is forgotten. In your own habitat you find yourself re-established in a region of individual enterprise, where every great building does not house a department or a bureau, but may be a museum, a hospital, a library, a university, what you will—but a culmination of private effort. There is something invigorating in this—something related closely to the “rugged individualism” of democratic society. Private, and sometimes predatory, business may loom behind it all. The arts and graces of life have nevertheless flourished, and it remains to be seen whether, in our national economy, the capital of administration, lifting itself at first, in other than political matters, somewhat by its own bootstraps, can become the capital also of

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

scholarship and the arts. It has already become regionally such a capital, and the very existence of the Library of Congress gives it a pre-eminence in one field while, in other fields, it may well put other regional capitals on their mettle. They cannot hope to rival Washington as a miracle of outward beauty.

Had I known libraries only of the eastern seaboard, I should have spoken less confidently than I have done about librarians and their staffs. In the spring of 1932 my experience at the Huntington Library at San Marino, California, taught me that the curators of books and manuscripts on one Coast are much like those on the other—a hospitable, helpful band. On an earlier page I have touched sufficiently upon the occasion of my visit at the invitation of its Director, Dr. Max Farrand, to that distant hunting-ground of scholars. Professor Frederick Jackson Turner, a permanent member of the Huntington staff, welcomed me as a fellow member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, of which he had been president. His death occurred during my brief term of service at the Library, and, acutely aware of his influence on the

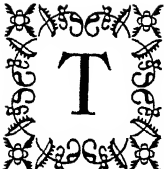
### *Books, Institutions, and Persons*

writing of American history, as also of his delightful personal qualities, I prepared a memoir of him for the "Transactions" of the Colonial Society. What I recall with special pleasure is that, during the grave illness through which I passed a year after my visit to the Huntington Library, I summoned strength to dictate a letter to Professor Hazen of Columbia, chairman of the Pulitzer jury on history to which I then belonged, begging that Turner's posthumous book, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, which had not been submitted as a candidate for a Pulitzer award, should be considered for that distinction. The plea prevailed, and the jury united in recommending the award, which was made. Here, for me, was a ray of light in a time of darkness.



# 14

## Catastrophe

OO GENTLY, I dare say, the world had dealt with me for nearly seventy years. No matter how mildly a Northern winter begins, the full quota of snow and zero weather may generally be counted upon in the complete record of it. In the winter and spring of 1933 all the ills I had been spared through many preceding years—except only those in which I feared for my eyesight—were visited upon me. In the summer of a convalescence following thirteen weeks in Phillips House, of the Massachusetts General Hospital, I put my survival to the test of recording what I had endured. This took the form of an anonymous article, "Delusion and Reality," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* of December 1933. While the experience was so near, I shrank from attaching my name to the story of it. The article, now that it may be of service to this narrative, is too long for inclusion as a whole; but, though its tone of immediacy in relation to agonies just suffered

## *Catastrophe*

may seem out of key with the surrounding pages, I can do no other than give some portions of it:—

When I was hurried to a hospital at a half hour's notice one afternoon last February, I little realized what lay before me. It never entered my head that the emergency operation which so upset all my plans for the day and week would have to be followed by two others, or that I was to spend more than three months in the hands of physicians, surgeons, and nurses, to the intense anxiety and later, when I emerged convalescent, to the astonishment of friends and a family which appeared to have more need of me than ever before. Nor could I have foreseen into what a strange world I was about to plunge—a world of fantastic unrealities all intertwined with the clearest verities and with blendings of the real and the unreal that would have perplexed the profoundest philosopher. . . .

The Hoover Administration was at its last gasp, and so, to all appearances,—though far from realizing it at the time,—was I. Does it seem presumptuous to link my personal fortunes with those of the nation? I should not venture to do so but for a curious dream, vision, or delirious imagining

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

that came to me soon after the hospital bed became my long habitation. The vision had to do with my coming to the hospital, with whatever it might hold for me, and occurred soon after my arrival. Certainly one and possibly two operations had intervened. I seemed to see myself borne at a terrific speed, as if in a racing motor car or an airplane skimming the ground, along a straight avenue at the end of which rose an immense wall of solid masonry, with a bull's-eye of white stone at its center. That was the spot I knew myself destined to hit. In the world of fact there was nothing more like it than Connecticut Avenue in Washington, with the McClellan statue as one's objective, only without the comforting avenues of escape by deflection to the right or left rear. There was, however, a feeling that after my smash-up I might be able to drag myself round the ends of the wall and find a peaceful stretch of grass and trees—"bright fields beyond the swelling flood"—where I might lie down and recover my strength.

Nor was this quite all of my vision. In the rush to inevitable disaster the impending fate of the Hoover Administration, with which my sympathy had always been limited, seemed curiously joined

## *Catastrophe*

with my own. We were going to smash together. I do not remember feeling any special concern for what was to befall my fellow victims of ruin. If they too were to drag their bruised and battered forms past an end of the masonry wall into the pleasant pastures that were my only hope, no such vision was vouchsafed to me. Was it to the general discredit of human nature that self-preservation seemed to be uppermost in my distracted mind?

In that wandering portion of my ordinarily placid being, the Presidency and all that concerned it held an amazingly important place. When I was well out of the woods, my day nurse informed me of one of the delusions that had given particular amusement to those about me. I had apparently conceived the idea that there was an effort on foot to install me as President of the United States. My protest was vigorous: "No, I am altogether too busy; besides, my family would not like it at all" —*nolo episcopari* with a vengeance! Yet while at my worst I had enough hold on reality to dictate a night-letter telegram to the President-elect on March 1, three days before he assumed office. There was at least the excuse of certain personal

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

dealings in the year before his nomination. If the communication ever reached him, it must have appeared merely as one of thousands of similar expressions of good will. Like many arrows shot forth in the form of messages, it was bound to mean a good deal more to the bowman than it could transmit to the target, for in the welter of delusion in which I was living at the time I seemed to stand on a rock of reality when I contrived somehow to piece the following words together:—

Even in the backwater of a hospital where I have lately undergone two operations am acutely conscious of a new spirit in America. I believe this to be your own spirit. The true Democrat of the old order who has always known the new order to be a vital part of it seems coming into his own. God bless you and your Administration to the good of the whole world.

. . . . .

Before this surgical experience of mine, near the latter end of what cannot be less than a longish life, I had never visited a hospital except as a caller on unfortunate friends. My three months gave to me what many of them had managed to distribute over a considerable number of years, and I could

## *Catastrophe*

not help feeling that they had chosen the better part. Even my glimpse of their strange plight had made me realize how abnormal the normal world must look from a hospital bed. Could there be just outside the walls a city full of men and women, boys and girls, vigorous enough to be pursuing untrammelled all the labors and pleasures, sometimes rolled into one, to which the human race is addicted? Can there be a state of existence in which doctors and nurses are superfluous? Here they are so nearly everything that a life in which they are nothing is well-nigh inconceivable. If such thoughts cross the mind of a mere visitor, they can hardly fail to become paramount when weeks stretch into months and one becomes an inhabitant.

Doctors and nurses—how extraordinary in action and at close range are these functionaries of a life-saving station which ministers to so infinitely greater a number of human beings in desperate straits than any outpost of mercy and salvation on the most perilous coast! There must, of course, be some element of luck in falling into the hands of better or worse representatives of the art and science of healing, but surely I have heard many persons

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

declare after a serious illness, "What wonderful doctors I had, and what wonderful nurses!"—and I have encountered few utterances of blame instead of praise.

Indeed, the doctors and nurses can hardly help developing admirable qualities. Without them they would never have chosen their arduous, self-sacrificing professions, which in turn do everything to cultivate the best that is in them. Scientific knowledge, manual skill, mechanical ingenuity, the wisdom and tact required for delicate human relationships—all these the doctor must possess; so, in her own degree, must the nurse, and to these she must add a provision of patience and gentleness through all the "twelve-hour shift" from which even the workers in steel mills have long been exempted. These qualities in constant operation are among the realities of a hospital experience, and how a nurse maintains her equanimity through weeks and weeks of continuous attendance upon one person, without so much as a Saturday afternoon or Sunday off, is still beyond me. When a competent reformer (which I am not) starts an organized movement to substitute three eight-hour shifts for the present two twelve-hour terms of

## *Catastrophe*

servitude, I for one shall be ready to join it.<sup>1</sup> My own day nurse informed me that, besides never having cared for anyone else so ill who finally recovered, she had never been so long in the uninterrupted care of one person. Yet her patience and devotion—like those of the equally memorable night nurse—never faltered. . . .

More than once there was a frank confronting of the idea of death. It must have been always at the back of my mind, where, in my struggle for life, I was content for the most part to leave it. When it came to the fore,—as of course it did from time to time,—it was not, as I look back upon it now, in any suggestion of a “king of terrors.” I was vaguely conscious of its presence in rooms near by, and must have realized that it had a way of stalking rather familiarly up and down the corridors. Perhaps one’s weakness reconciles one to almost anything. Perhaps the arduous, weeks-on-end exercise of patience—one of the least tractable of virtues—sharpens one’s capacity for accepting the inevitable. It does not seem to me now that

<sup>1</sup> In fact this reform was already under way, and soon reached the very hospital I had known. It was good to learn that its advocates made some use of this passage in my *Atlantic* article.



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

the termination of life in one's present experience of it can ever again seem so dreadful a thing as it had sometimes appeared before. Perhaps I have never dreaded it in proportion to its full deserts. . . .

They tell you that a patient has a good deal to do with his own recovery. Possibly he has, but one would hesitate to suggest that he can hope to be much more than a cog in the mechanism of his welfare. It is a question whether he can be even that unless he acquires early in his illness a confidence in his doctors and nurses which inclines him to a thoroughgoing coöperation with them, offering not even a passive resistance—in fact, adding his effort, however feeble, to theirs, however powerful.

One of the realities of which I am firmly convinced is that the strongest of all incentives to effort comes from outside the hospital walls. To lie within them and not to feel that in the world one has left for a time there are those, of the nearest nearness, who ardently desire one's restoration to familiar paths, and that there are friends who share, sometimes in a degree quite unexpected, in this desire—that would indeed hamper beyond computation one's power to help one's helpers. To

## *Catastrophe*

the unfriended, to the lonely in strange places,—even as to the uncared-for, the wounded in wars, cut to pieces not with salvation but with destruction in view,—the sympathy of the watchfully, skillfully tended patient, fortified by the knowledge that his recovery is a matter of genuine concern to others, goes out in abundant measure. If a spark of the spirit of fight remains in him, he is bound to puff it into such flame as it can achieve. To rekindle his dying fires he will draw upon every resource, physical and spiritual, of which he finds himself possessed, and of all these forces he may well discover that the invisible friends, and more than friends, who mingle their realities with the delusions of his hospital room are the truly potent and effectual. . . .

Of all the many things, then, learned through a long communing with realities, none remains more clearly defined than the wreck of an old delusion. How often have I refrained, when friends have suffered illness and sorrow, from the expression, through a message, or flower, or whatever token, of a natural sympathy? There was not quite a sufficient warrant of intimacy; somebody would be put to the trouble of writing a note of

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

thanks—there were as many excuses as if one had been bidden to a Biblical wedding feast. Never again! The smallest word, joined with other waftings from without, makes its own contribution to a curative force of incalculable power. Fortunate the patient, face to face with the necessity of furthering his own recovery, who finds his weariness and weakness turned into some semblance of strength by the mere knowledge that friends, not yet admitted to his room, are standing, as it were, by his door, like re-enforcements to exhausted troops! Without their help the bull's-eye in the masonry wall might well have been the end of me.

With this expression of gratitude which eight years have not diminished my printed reflections came to a close. They had told much, but not nearly all. There was one event that overshadowed every other. That was the death of my wife, nearly a month before my discharge from the hospital. Spent with care and stricken with a sudden fatal infection, she withstood its effects for a few days, and then went to the end which had been expected for me and never imagined for her. What I have said about her on previous pages will have sug-

## *Catastrophe*

gested the need now confronting me to summon such forces as I could command, to go on without her. What she meant to others than our children and to me—as most intimately of all to us—may be indicated if I share with readers of this book the words written soon after her death by a devoted friend of many years.

There was about her an individuality too elusive and many-sided to be put adequately in words. She was—herself! And it is that gallant, shy, modest, warm-hearted, truth-loving self that her friends are missing—only the beginning of a long missing to which they may become accustomed rather than reconciled. To be clear-sighted and yet tolerant; to be critical, but most so of oneself; to see the humour of life, without the unkindly spirit that so often goes with such perception; to be hospitable to new ideas without losing one's standards of appraisal; to possess a burning intensity of feeling under calm and willed control—all that was hers.

To a larger circle her genuine talent as a writer—too little and too furtively exercised—gave real delight. But with her charming gaiety and whimsical humour, one felt that deep in her spirit there was “a place remote and islanded”; she was not sad, but perhaps a little wistful at the sadness and discord of a world, in which she quietly went about

## *A Venture in Remembrance*


doing good that life might be for others a happier thing. As the years passed she grew in grace and graces, and these were written in the beauty of her thoughtful face. When the end came, as a friend said of her, "she went down with all flags flying"—though those last valiant weeks were but constant to the tradition of a distinguished race.

In the splendid passages from the Book of Proverbs read at Mrs. Howe's funeral not a word seemed irrelevant or unreal. She would have denied their application; but we, her friends, know that they were only a truthful description of a full, happy, and completed life. And for us who remain, something more is completed—a finished self-portrait, in colours that years cannot dim. In this vivid memory our mind secures "as good a shield as may be found against the loneliness of time—it has a dole on which to live. That which once was is safe, and cannot suffer bankruptcy. That which was and is no more is hidden treasure."

So we again go on our daily tasks, and remembering her, thank God and take courage.

D. B. U.

*After the Day's Work*

HEN A wayfarer is knocked down by a hit-and-run truck and left battered by the roadside, he may either perish there or, knowing hardly how or why, find himself plodding on again. In my own case the how and why were matters of purely private concern, of which there is no need to say more in this place than that friends of infinite generosity and kindness who had come to my rescue in the hospital continued their healing ministrations immediately and long after my emergence from its walls. Let me add only that the sorrows which have visited the world since I have been relatively alone would have been doubly grievous to any intimate witness of their impact upon my wife's sensitive spirit. More gladly would I have shared with her the spectacle of children maturing and making places for themselves—an elder son in editing, writing, and broadcasting; a daughter in the art of monologue; a younger son in legal scholarship. This spectacle should not have

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

been for one parent only—nor should it have fallen to him alone to welcome four grandchildren.

At first I could foresee in these later years nothing but anticlimax. It is extraordinary, however, that so much remains to be done after the day's work seems to have been accomplished. The temperament with which my parents endowed me—a possession for which I can take no credit—has made it natural to do what I could with "the trivial round, the common task." This presented itself, in congenial shapes—the returning to interests already formed, the producing of several books, to which direct and indirect references have been made on earlier pages, and the companionship of friends. In the June following my long illness, I was elected to a second term of six years as a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers. Thus my final close association with Harvard coincided with President Conant's first six years in office. When I saw him inaugurated at forty, he was not quite the "boy president" Charles W. Eliot had been at thirty-five, on taking office sixty-four years earlier. Eliot's forty years as president had been followed by Lowell's twenty-four, and the dignity of age

## *After the Day's Work*

had come to be associated with the presidency of Harvard. As one of the older members of the Board, I observed with special interest the swinging of youth into action. The Overseers—an elective body of thirty—who do not take themselves too seriously realize that their power is chiefly negative. As chairmen of committees appointed to visit the many departments of the university, they can make themselves of a certain use, especially when the faculty chairman of a department is of a coöperative spirit. They can hardly help learning something themselves, and introducing their colleagues at least to a nodding acquaintance with some branches of learning. They remain constantly aware, however, that their real power is a negative force, lodged in the power of veto. This may be exercised on many of the important actions of the inner governing board of seven, the President and Fellows, commonly known as “the Corporation.” Elections even to this self-perpetuating board require approval by the Overseers. Only once in my twelve years on the Board was the veto power exercised to annul the offer of an important professorship. This was the sort of thing which does not need to happen more than once in twenty or



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

thirty years to induce a salutary caution on the part of the Corporation in its appointments to be submitted to the Overseers for approval. The President, a member of both governing boards, represents the *liaison* between them, and it was in this function that President Conant began at once to show the mettle of an intellect trained in science. This made him a patient listener, reaching his decisions after a careful weighing of evidence, yet near enough to the ardors of youth to entertain little fear of abiding by the consequences of his own decisions. At times when President Lowell was under criticism, President Eliot, according to report, used to say that he, in his day, was much more severely criticized. There is a sort of apostolic succession in such matters, and one can hardly doubt that when President Conant finds himself taken to task by Harvard men and others, he must reflect with comfort on what his predecessors have undergone. We who saw him begin his presidency hold a happy confidence that its continuance over a reasonable span of years will ensure a third successive great contribution to educational leadership in America.

Perhaps through owing allegiance to more than

## *After the Day's Work*

one *alma mater*, I have always tried to escape the stigmata of the "professional Harvard man." Every college has the counterpart of this figure—one whose devotion to his own college is so concentrated that other institutions seem hardly to exist for him. There are even some who never quite outgrow the feeling that a football victory over a dearest foe is the most important educational event of the year. The athletic trustee is fair game for such a caricature as one of the *dramatis personæ* in that capital play, "The Male Animal." There is one remembrance, and only one, of remarks at a meeting of the Harvard Board of Overseers which led one of its members to say to me as we were quitting the Faculty Room, "Is there no way of keeping sophomores off this Board?" These meetings, to be sure, were sometimes dull, but often enlivened by reports and discussions of a high order. The members of the Board, elected by the whole body of Harvard degree holders, represent as wide a range of interests as of geographical distribution, and it would be an anomaly indeed were the proceedings, supposed to be of benefit to the University, not rewarding at times also to the participants. The

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Charles Francis Adams of the generation just before my own, himself a member of the Board for twenty-four years, is credited with having defined it as "the pleasantest club in New England." And in spite of the dust and ashes which sifted their way through Mr. Adams's "Autobiography," he was emphatically a man who knew, and enjoyed, a pleasant thing when he met with it.

The number of pleasant clubs in Boston is legion. The companionship of friends through these years of reprieve has been mentioned, and this can hardly stand without some reference to meeting places. The community indeed is honey-combed with clubs—larger organizations with their own buildings and their several banners half-staffed at the death of members, and the smaller, migratory, undomiciled bodies, meeting in private houses, hotels, and the larger clubs, for lunch, dinner, or supper, sometimes with "papers" to be read and discussed, sometimes with nothing but food and drink and talk to serve as magnets for attendance. In an Introduction to *Later Years of the Saturday Club*, I described these as the "subcutaneous" clubs of Boston, and likened them to the pipes and wires beneath a city street, unseen

## *After the Day's Work*

but of large importance to present-day existence. In the origin and continuance of Boston clubs a social historian would find much to occupy his attention. Even within recent years I have heard a distinguished member of the Union Club, founded during the Civil War by his distinguished grandfather and others, declare: "Of course I could never join the Somerset Club—its members hissed Robert Shaw and his Negro regiment as they marched down Beacon Street." Such scruples have not affected by any means all the descendants of antislavery Bostonians. One is carried even farther back into the past by the long, unbroken roll of members of the "subcutaneous" Wednesday Evening Club of 1770, with nothing but social intercourse for an object. The beginnings of the Saturday Club were all intertwined with those of the *Atlantic Monthly*, even as the Examiner Club sprang, in the 1860's, from the association of writers for a Unitarian periodical, the *Christian Examiner*, nearing its end but continued in 1870 by *Old and New*, soon to be merged with *Scribner's Monthly*, from which the *Century* proceeded. To a still earlier club, the Anthology Society, the Boston Athenæum owes its origin, and this Society

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

published the *Monthly Anthology*, the direct progenitor of the *North American Review*. But I would not emulate Edward Everett Hale's *Memories of a Hundred Years*, nor imply that clubs and periodicals are always of the same genealogy in Boston. There is, to be sure, a certain amount of dining with a purpose, so to suggest the joining of business and pleasure in the dinners of Trustees of the Massachusetts Humane Society and of the Boston Library Society, continued for pleasure only in the second instance, since the recent merging of that Society with the Athenæum. In the neighboring town of Dedham such a continuance may be even more picturesquely seen in the annual dinners of the "Society in Dedham for Apprehending Horse-Thieves." Though some good things die hard, others live vigorously, even through these evil days upon which clubs have fallen everywhere. That older and larger sister of the Tavern Club, the St. Botolph, with the same concern for the arts as an important recommendation for membership, is surely one of the hardy survivors.

Heaven forbid that I should belong to all the clubs I have named—or to a number of others

## *After the Day's Work*

equally worth naming. What I have been trying to suggest, as a member of a few and an occasional guest at more, is that men with a liking for their fellows may find in Boston abundant opportunities for congenial and stimulating male society. The "Dining Gladiator" has many opportunities to exercise his prowess, whether in the company of his own or of both sexes. I cannot dismiss the matter of men's dinners without recalling one, at which Professor E. K. Rand of Harvard was the host, and a visiting Greek scholar from England, C. M. Bowra, now Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, the guest of honor. Highbrow levity was here at its best. When the cigars were lighted, the host addressed each of his guests in Latin. The order was clockwise, so that the guest of honor received the last salutation. Then the Old World triumphed over the New, for Bowra's response flowed forth in Greek. One could identify an occasional *καί* or *γάρ*, and, if truth be told, the host's Latin was not *semper ubique* understood. At least once the whole company did follow him, and that was when he addressed me as *Marcus Antonius DeLupus Quam*—to which he added, in all solemnity, *Et Quam!* Now I make my bow to him in public.

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

Dinners and clubs are one thing. Friendship is another and more intimate matter, measurable only in terms of units. Especially in the smaller dining clubs, these units may come together under one of the most civilized forms of human intercourse. Even in the meeting places for larger numbers, one's intimates are found, and approaches to the universal are suddenly reduced to the particular. For myself, I cannot be thankful enough that when so much was taken, it was made clear, through friends, that much could still abide. Twice in recent years I have sailed the seas with fellow members of one of these smaller clubs. First it was with William James and his wife, ideal companions for a cruise in the Mediterranean on the beautiful *Champlain*—now, alas, sunk *furore Teutonico*. To have seen Gibraltar and Athens, if only for a day, has brought one nearer in this tragic year to both the British and the Greeks. Then it was with Allston Burr to Panama and Jamaica, where we were met immediately by an arresting recognition of our years. The Negro chambermaid who showed us to our rooms at the Good Hope ranch was questioned about us at "the desk" and reported, as we were soon to learn,

## *After the Day's Work*

"They plenty ripe." Not yet can I accept without a qualm the sequel to ripeness.

Far indeed I seem to have strayed from the Unrepentant Liberal of a previous chapter. Let me come back to those two words. Unrepentant? Not quite, for I do repent the shortcomings of my liberalism. The true cure for democracy is said to be more democracy. So it is with liberalism, a word sharing many connotations with another word, Christianity. There, too, the imperfections are cured by more of the thing itself. Out of my own experience I must confess that the workings both of liberalism and of the Christian religion have provided ample grounds for repentance.

It is an old saying about the religion of the sensible man that the sensible man does not talk about it. Certainly I do not want to talk in any detail about mine. What it might have been to one who has held to his birthright in it, rather than what it has been, may nevertheless be touched upon. There is, for one thing, the old-fashioned habit of churchgoing, an external matter, if you will, more a means than an end, an approach than



## *A Venture in Remembrance*

an arrival. I should like to suggest what it may mean.

Time was when the non-churchgoers had to account for themselves. Now it is the other way round. At the very beginning, then, the churchgoers had better get rid of any pride in their conduct and character. They will find themselves put to it to prove even a semblance of superiority to certain non-churchgoers in their several circles. Let them consider whether their own lives and spirits house, more effectually than in others, the virtues which the church is expected, indeed exists, to nourish. Instead of being too sorry for those who are not profiting from these influences, let them be sorrier that they are not themselves getting more from them.

When it comes to such benefits, the churchgoer is on solid ground. He takes himself periodically, as I have suggested on an earlier page, out of the realm of prose and enters that of poetry. The "things" which Emerson found "in the saddle" are the material concerns of every day. Music and art and poetry afford a refuge from them but, with the skimmed devotion which most of us can pay to these liberating forces, hardly do we find in them

## *After the Day's Work*

that completed refuge which sometimes—not always—offers itself in common prayer and common worship. If through that voluntary exercise anybody can gain a nearer sense of the unseen, vitalizing, unifying realities, as many can, it is merely a self-inflicted loss to miss it. The days of compulsion by law and by public opinion are past, and for that we may well be thankful. In this better time of personal, individual compulsion the place of poetry in a world of prose needs only to be recognized, not defended.

Through the secular days of the week the liberal and—should I write and/or?—the Christian stand in a common peril. They had better beware the smallest suggestion of “holier than thou.” In matters of opinion they must remember Cromwell’s plea, “in the bowels of Christ,” to reflect that they may be wrong. It is the doers of the word—not the hearers only, and still less the talkers of it—who really matter. As for “the word” itself—there is no need to spell it out, and there are countless ways of doing it. George Herbert’s recipe for making “drudgerie divine” applies to many occupations besides sweeping a room. I can claim all too little for my own attempts to apply it to the vari-

## *A Venture in Remembrance*


ous interests with which in greater and less degree I have been concerned—writing, publishing, music, and education, to say nothing of more intimate matters. If I had been able to gratify my parents' desire that I should enter the ministry, the opportunities to put precept into practice would probably have been more frequent. That advantage, however, might have been offset by a weight of professional responsibility. After all, there is much to be said for the amateur. It is one thing to be called upon to defend and expound the creeds of the Church, and quite another to stand up and join in reciting them as historic statements of general beliefs handed down through the ages. The layman can do much—vastly more than I have done—to further the organized efforts of any faith to which he owes allegiance. He may leave to the theologian such matters as the “double procession of the Holy Ghost” and other points, major and minor, of dogma. However orthodox or heterodox his private beliefs may be, he will do well to ponder the conviction at which that honest sceptic, Hans Zinsser, arrived when all was said and done—a “conviction of the wisdom and guiding in-

*After the Day's Work*

tegrity of the compassionate philosophy of Christ.” Thus, and not for the first time, a faith has found its expression through one who did not profess to hold it.

# 16

## *Testament*

HEN THE writing of these remembrances began in the summer of 1939 the "Second World War" was only casting its shadow before. After many interruptions, the writing ends in the grim midwinter of 1941. As it has proceeded, the recording of so much that is personal and parochial has seemed again and again an employment with little to justify it. While the death struggle between democracies and dictators was shaking the world, was there nothing better for an old man to do than to reach back into his own past? Was it entirely the fault of his advancing years that he found himself rushing far less frequently into print on behalf of causes, like those of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations, the defeat of which still seem to him a major source of present calamities? Do the counterparts of these causes really exist today, or has the old choice between what seemed really good and really bad narrowed down to a choice of evils, a decision between al-

## *Testament*

ternatives neither of which seems wholly desirable?

No, it is not so simple as that. When one has passed seventy-five there are certain objects which appear to have more sides than they had at fifty, and still more and more than at twenty-five. A few things remain uncomplicated. In all the murk and noise of conflict today it is still possible to distinguish backward and forward movements, and to make a choice between them. One may not choose to run, but nobody can choose to stand still, and if a reader of the preceding pages has not read between their lines a continuing sympathy with the general progress of human society, national and international, for which the recent and present Government of our country has stood, the lines themselves must have been unwittingly obscure.

It is in these and not in what lies between them that any value of a record like this may be found. If it has dealt predominantly with the past, it is only as the past in every present is related to the future. The patterns of American life have been and will be manifold. One of them—and that of no startling form or significance—is presented here. As I look back on what it has offered to me, I recognize the good fortune which I have shared

## *A Venture in Remembrance*

with many of my generation. Looking forward I permit myself a testament of hope for those who will come after me, that they will meet with later equivalents of what I have known, and will turn them to better account than I have done. I hope, too, that their rewards, like mine, may outnumber their buffets.

THE END

# INDEX





# Index

- ABBOTT, HOLKER, 227  
 Adamowski, T. and J., 219  
 Adams, Brooks, 76  
 Adams, Charles Francis, 187, 296  
 Adams, James Truslow, 264-265  
 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 101, 152, 156, 160  
 Allen, Frederick L., 251  
 Allen, A. V. G., 170  
 Ames, Fisher, 186  
 Ames, Winthrop, 217-219  
 Andover House, 146  
 Andrew, J. A. (Gov.), 103  
 Andrews, E. Benjamin, 53  
 Anthology Society, 297  
 Arlington St. Church, 180  
 Aspinwall, W. H. and Lloyd, 42  
*Atlantic Monthly*, 130, 131-135, 176, 206, 278, 297  
 Atlantic Monthly Press, 258-266  
  
 "BACCHANTE," MACMONNIES', 220  
 Bach Festivals (Bethlehem), 63, 254  
 Bacon, Edwin M., 142  
 Baker, George P., 91, 136, 218  
 Baker, Newton D., 239  
 Bancroft, George, see *Life and Letters of*  
 Bancroft, Mrs. John C., 200  
*Barrett Wendell and His Letters*, 85, 267  
 Barrie, J. M., 113  
 Bates, Arlo, 160  
 "Beacon Biographies," the, 170-172, 257  
 Beard, Charles A., 274  
 Bell, Mrs. (Helen Choate), 157  
 Bell, Samuel, 45  
 Bellamy, Francis, 128  
 Benade, "Hettie," 45  
 Bennett, Arnold, 122  
 Berenson, Bernard, 91  
 Berry, Walter, 25  
 Bethlehem, Pa., 62, 254  
 "Betty's Finish," 137  
 Bigelow, H. F., 219  
 Blanc, Mme., 156  
 Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, 169  
 Bolton, C. K., 177  
*Book Buyer*, 168, 172  
*Bookman*, 172  
 Bookplate, 19  
 "Boosey's National Glees," 20-22  
 Boston, 86-88, 178-196; clubs, 296-299  
*Boston, the Place and the People*, 119, 175, 179, 197  
 Boston Athenæum, 99, 172, 176-178, 216, 270, 297, 298

# Index

- Boston Evening Transcript*, 239  
 Boston Library Society, 298  
*Boston Post*, 142  
 Boston Symphony Orchestra, 99, 253-255  
 Bowra, C. M., 299  
 Bradford, Gamaliel, 80, 118, 176, 212, 215-217  
 Brandeis, Louis D., 141, 193  
 Briggs, LeB. R., 78, 84  
 Bristol, R. I., 8, 26, 37-43  
 Brooks, Phillips, 88-90, 113, 129, 137  
 Brooks, Van Wyck, 80 *n.*, 173, 191, 212  
 Broun, Heywood, 214  
 Burk, John N., 254  
 Burnside, General A. E., 41  
 Burr, Allston, 246, 300  
 Butterworth, Hezekiah, 115-116, 169  
 CABOT, FREDERICK P., 255  
 Cabot, George, 186  
 Cabots, wintry, 87  
 Callan, Michael, 165  
 Carman, Bliss, 118, 169  
 Carpenter, George R., 136  
 Cather, Willa, 156  
*Causes and Their Champions*, 262  
 Chadwick, G. W., 254  
 Chamberlin, J. E., 111  
 Channing, Edward, 243  
 Channing, William Ellery, 180  
 Chapman, John Jay, 27, 159-160, 162, 261-264  
 Charnwood, Lord, 265-266  
 Child, F. J., 77, 80-81, 83, 130  
*Children's Judge, The*, 255  
 Chorales, 62  
*Christian Examiner*, 277  
 Christmas Eve, 184-185  
 Churchgoing, 301-304  
 Clay, Thomas H., 117  
 Cleveland, President Grover, 112, 233  
 Clubs, Boston, 296-299  
 Coleridge, Lord (C. J.), 113  
 Collyer, Robert, 156  
 Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 276, 277  
 Conant, James B., 292, 294  
 Coolidge, Algernon, 293  
 Copeland, Charles Townsend, 141-145, 153, 155, 171  
 Copeland & Day, 168  
 "Cosmetologists," 182-183  
 Cotuit, Mass., 186, 243-244  
 Coward, Edward Fales, 42  
 "Craddock, Charles Egbert," 133  
 Crane, Stephen, 169  
 Crothers, S. M., 181  
 Cummings, C. K., 226-230  
 Cushing, Harvey, 219  
 DALTON, TRISTRAM, 186  
 Dana, Francis, 186  
 Dane, Nathan, 186

# Index

- Davis, Charles Belmont, 66-67  
 Davis, Richard Harding, 64-74, 130  
 Deland, Margaret, 133 .  
 Dennett, Tyler, 274  
 D'Wolf, "Captain Jim," 41  
 D'Wolf, Mark Anthony, 39  
 DeWolf houses and family, 38-40  
 Dickens, Charles, 155, 181  
 Dickinson, Emily, 18-19  
*Dictionary of American Biography*, 210  
 Dixon, William, 140  
 Dobson, Austin, 161, 269  
 Dodd, Mead & Co., 173  
 "Dooley, Mr.," 170  
 Draper, Ruth, 143  
 Dromgoole, Will Allen, 115  
 Duane, Reverend Richard B., 56  
 Dwight, James, 24  
 Dwight, Timothy, 181  
*Economist*, LONDON, 238  
 Einstein, Albert, 154-155  
 Eliot, Charles W., 80, 92, 292, 294  
 Emerson, R. W., 103, 155  
 England, feeling for, 132  
*English Interpreter, An*, 151  
 Everett, Edward, 202  
 Everett, William, 194  
 Examiner Club, 216, 297  
 FALL RIVER BOAT, 10-12  
 Farrand, Max, 276  
 Farrar, F. W. (Canon), 112  
 Federalists, 31, 185-186  
 Field, R. M., 117  
 Fields, Mrs. James T., 155-158, 161, 225  
 Fisk, "Commodore Jim," 11  
 Fitch, Clyde, 69, 137  
 Flag salute, 126-128  
 Flandrau, Charles M., 117  
 Fletcher, J. B., 136  
 Football, first intercollegiate game at Lehigh, 64, 68  
 Foote, Mrs. Arthur, 141  
*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 269  
 Forbes, W. Cameron, 20  
 Ford, Daniel Sharp, 105-106, 110  
 Ford, Worthington C., 171, 264  
 Ford Hall, Boston, 112  
 "Fourth, the Glorious," 40-41  
 Francis, Susan M., 134  
 Frankfurter, Felix, 260  
 Frazier, Kenneth, 73  
 "Frederick Lemaître," 137  
 Frost, Robert, 120-121  
 GARNETT, RICHARD, 169  
 Garrison, W. L., 103  
 Gaugengigl, I. M., 219  
 Gibson, Charles Dana, 40, 42, 73  
 Gibson, Langdon, 42  
 Gladstone, W. E., 112  
 Goodhue, Benjamin, 186

# Index

- Goodhue, Bertram Grosvenor, 19, 170  
 Grant, Robert, 152, 219  
 Grant, President U. S., 41, 104  
 Guiney, Louise Imogen, 105, 156  
 Guiteras, Ramon, 39
- HALE, EDWARD EVERETT, 89, 93-95, 298  
 Hapgood, Norman, 91, 136, 170  
 Harding, President Warren G., 235-236  
 Hare, Hobart Amory, 9  
 Hare, William Hobart (Bishop), 10  
*Harper's Weekly*, 179  
 Harrison, President Benjamin, 95-98, 112, 126  
 Harvard, Reverend John, 202  
 Harvard, Lionel de Jersey, 203  
 Harvard, Peter, 203  
*Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, 241-249, 262  
 Harvard Board of Overseers, 99, 292-296  
 Harvard College, 76-94, 188  
 Harvard College Library, 271  
*Harvard Monthly*, 90-95, 137, 161  
 "Harvard Roll of Honor," 245-246
- Harvard War Memoirs*, 202, 209, 249-252  
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 155  
 Hazeltine, Mayo W., 205  
 Hazen, Charles D., 277  
 Henry St. Settlement, 146  
 Herrick, Robert, 77, 136  
 Herrick, William Hale, 77  
 Higginson, Henry L., 253-255  
 Higginson, Stephen, 186  
 Hill, A. S., 77, 81-83  
 Hodgson, Richard, 219-223  
 Holman, Louis A., 202  
 Holmes, Dr. Oliver Wendell, 103, 114, 140, 157  
 Holmes, Justice Oliver Wendell, 113, 193  
*Holmes of the Breakfast-Table*, 102, 151  
 Hoover Administration, 279-280  
 Hopkins, Reverend John Henry, 54-56  
 Hopper, DeWolf, 40  
 Horse-Thieves, Society in Dedham for Apprehending, 298  
 Houghton, Alanson B., 91  
 Houghton, H. O., 131  
 Hovey, Richard, 169  
 Howe, Eliza W., 9, 31-36, 164-165  
 Howe, Fanny H. Q., 138-139, 175, 197-200, 288-290, 291  
 Howe, Julia Ward, 225

## Index

- Howe, M. A. DeW. (Bishop),  
7-8, 15-16, 30-31, 48-  
49, 52-53, 164
- Howe, M. A. DeW., sum-  
mers at R. I. birthplace,  
7-43; school in Reading,  
45-46, 51; stammering,  
46-51; Lehigh University,  
58-75; at Harvard, 76-  
95; first earnings by pen,  
96-98; Bostonian or poet?,  
99-103; with the *Youth's  
Companion*, 104-128;  
with the *Atlantic Monthly*,  
131-135; clubs, friends,  
etc., 135-160; trouble  
with eyes, 161-167; first  
books and editing, 168-  
174; marriage, 175; and  
the Boston scene, 175-  
196; biographical tasks and  
method, 200-214; pleas-  
ures of friendship, 215-  
230; and "liberalism,"  
231-240; in war-time,  
241-252; "tainted," 248-  
249; and Boston Sym-  
phony Orchestra, 253-  
255; publishing business,  
256-258; relations with  
writers, 261-266; biogra-  
phies, 268-270; in Wash-  
ington, 272-276; illness  
and sorrow, 278-290;  
careers of children, 291;  
renewed activities, Har-  
vard, clubs, etc., 291-301;  
liberalism and Christianity,  
301-305; conclusions,  
306-308.
- Howe, Quincy, 175, 259
- Howe, Reginald H., 135
- Howe, Wallis E., 140, 142,  
147
- Howells, W. D., 110, 113,  
152, 181
- Hull House, 146, 147
- Huntington Library, 154,  
269, 276
- INCHES, MRS., 141
- JACKSON, JONATHAN, 185
- James, Henry, 110, 181,  
224-225
- James, William, 79, 222-224
- James, William, Jr., 300
- Jameson, J. Franklin, 210,  
274
- Jehovah's Witnesses, 128
- Jenkins, MacGregor, 147,  
260
- Jewett, J. R., 43
- Jewett, Sara Orne, 113, 133,  
155, 157, 198, 225
- John Jay Chapman and His  
Letters*, 27
- KING, MOSES, 95
- Kipling, Rudyard, 113
- Knowlton, Mrs., 141, 155
- LAMBERTON, W. A., 60
- Lang, Andrew, 214

## Index

- Late George Apley, The*, 101-102  
*Later Years of the Saturday Club*, 245, 296  
 Laughlin, L. E., 79  
 Lawrence, F. W., 135  
 Lawson, T. W., 95-98  
*Lehigh Burr*, 64, 73-74  
 Lehigh University, 58-76  
*Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, 119, 207-211  
 Libraries, 271-274  
 Library of Congress, 144, 272-274  
*Life and Labors of Bishop Hare*, 119  
*Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, 119, 200-203, 206  
 Lincoln letters, 260  
 London, Jack, 121-122  
 Longfellow, H. W., 103, 155  
 Longwood Cricket Club, 138  
 Lorne, Marquis of, 112  
 Louisburg Square, 184-185  
 Lovett, R. M., 91  
 Lowden, F. O., 235  
 Lowell, A. Lawrence, 92-93, 188, 243, 292, 294  
 Lowell, James Russell, 103, 271  
 Lowell, John, 185  
 Lowell, John, Jr., 186  
 MACARTHUR, JAMES, 172  
 Mack, John, 171  
 McCosh, James, 93  
 Macmillan Co., 175  
 Macy, John, 117, 171  
 Manchester, Mass., 155, 157  
 Martineau, Harriet, 181  
 Mass Club, 135  
 Massachusetts General Hospital, 278-289  
 Massachusetts Historical Society, 176, 276  
 Massachusetts Humane Society, 298  
*Memoirs of the Harvard Dead in the War against Germany*, 202, 209, 249-252  
 Mermaid Club, 136-137  
 Merrill, John D., 246  
 Meyer, G. von L., 268  
 Mitchell, S. Weir, 206  
*Monthly Anthology*, 298  
 Moody, W. S., 168  
 Moody, W. V., 91  
 Morse, John T., Jr., 187  
 Morton, Levi P., 95-98  
 Munro, Dana C., 43  
*Nation*, 173  
 Nevins, Allan, 211, 274  
*New York Times Book Review*, 178  
*News, The, and How to Understand It*, 259  
 Newton, A. Edward, 265-266  
*North American Review*, 114, 298

## Index

- Norton, Charles Eliot, 79,  
     206-211, 224, 271  
 Norton, Richard, 209  
 Norton, Sara, 119, 207-208  
*Notion-Counter, The*, 198  
 Nurses, 283-285  
 Nutter, George R., 141
- OCHS, ADOLPH S., 210  
*Old and New*, 297  
*Opal, The*, 198  
 Otis, Harrison Gray, 186  
 "Our Bandanna," 97-98  
*Our Young Folks*, 105
- PACKER, ASA, 58  
 Page, Walter H., 168, 258  
 Paine, Robert Treat, 186  
 Palmer, G. H., 79  
 Papyrus Club, 138  
 Parker, Gilbert, 133  
 Parker, H. T., 136  
 Parker, J. C. D., 135  
 Parrington, Vernon H., 173,  
     212  
 Parsons, Theophilus, 185  
 Perkins, Charles Bruen, 200  
 Perry, Bliss, 258  
 Perry, James DeWolf, 40  
 Perry, Lewis, 268  
 Perry, Ralph Barton, 40  
 Perry Mason & Co., 106  
*Persuasion*, 269  
 Philadelphia memories, 44-  
     45  
 Phillips, Wendell, 103  
*Phillips Brooks*, 170
- Pickering, Timothy, 186  
 Pier, Arthur S., 117, 251  
 Piper, Mrs., 220, 222  
 Potter, Henry C. (Bishop),  
     52  
 Providence Athenæum, 172  
 Publishing, 256-258  
 Pulitzer Prize, 267, 277  
 Puritan Club, 138  
 Putnam, Herbert, 272, 273  
 Putnam, J. J., 243
- QUINCY, EDMUND, 188  
 Quincy, Fanny Huntington,  
     see Howe, Fanny H. Q.  
 Quincy, Josiah, 186, 202
- RAND, E. K., 299  
 "Rari Nantes," 151, 152  
 Reading, Pa., 45, 53-54  
 "Reading Habit, The," 16-  
     18  
 Reynolds, P. R., 117  
 Rhodes, James Ford, 101,  
     186, 268  
 Richardson, W. A., 104  
 Rideing, W. H., 113-114  
 Roberts, Reverend W. D.,  
     129, 146  
 Rodenberg, W. A., 235  
 Roosevelt, President Frank-  
     lin D., 238, 282  
 Roosevelt, President Theo-  
     dore, 112, 233, 244  
 Ropes, J. H., 243  
 Russell, Nathaniel, 38

























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